



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

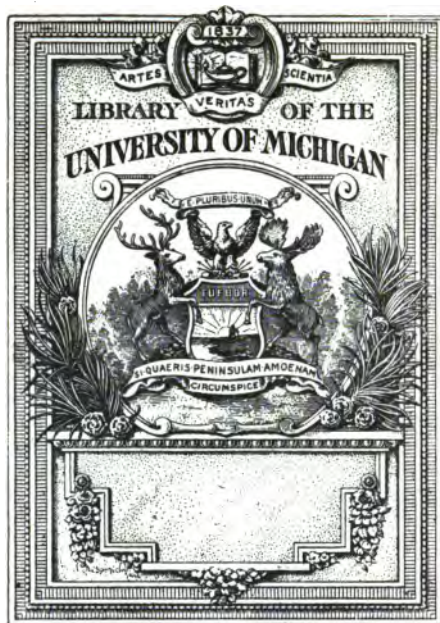
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



286100
828

ESSAYS

May



Uor 14

ESSAYS

BY

WRAY HUNT

LONDON

PRIVATELY PRINTED BY

HATCHARDS, 187 Piccadilly

1899

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE MOATED GRANGE (<i>Spectator</i>)	1
A MIDLAND STUDY (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	6
A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	11
THE STRIPLING THAMES (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	17
A COTSWOLD IDYLL (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	22
A QUIET CORNER ON THE SUSSEX SEABOARD (<i>Guardian</i>)	27
ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	33
A PARADISE IN WALES (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	38
THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE (<i>Globe</i>)	43
ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS (<i>Good Words</i>)	48
A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	59
AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE (<i>Pall Mall Gazette</i>)	64
CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE (<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>)	69
AN UNKNOWN OASIS (<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>)	76
AT ABOO-SIMBEL (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	87
THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA (<i>Spectator</i>)	91
THE LIFTED VEIL (<i>Queen</i>)	97
A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB	101
THE FREAKS OF FAME (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	109
THE PARTING OF THE WAYS	114
✓ SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS" (<i>St James's Gazette</i>)	120 ✓
FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST (<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>)	126
THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL AND ITS GHOST STORY (<i>Argosy</i>)	136
THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE (<i>Gentle- man's Magazine</i>)	142
A LOST OPPORTUNITY	163
POEMS	171

PREFACE

THE following "Essays" have for the most part appeared in various periodicals; some few unpublished ones which were finished and laid by have been added to them. They are now published by the friends of Wray Hunt as a memorial of him. To those who knew him and loved him they will be of value for his sake; and to others who did not know him they may show something of what the man was. Our grateful thanks are due to the Editors of *The Argosy*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Globe*, *Good Words*, *The Guardian*, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Queen*, *The Spectator*, and *The St James's Gazette*, for their permission to republish the articles, which appeared first in their pages.

INTRODUCTION

THE following notice appeared in *The Guardian*, 8th July 1897:—

There died suddenly at his beautiful rectory of Trowell, near Nottingham, on 30th June, one of the most beautiful-souled men in the English Church. Brought up in Liverpool, where his father was for many years an incumbent, Wray Hunt fell early beneath the spell of that quaint, but fascinating teacher, the brilliant and eccentric Dr Dawson Turner. From him he acquired a love of knowledge for its own sake, which made him a student to his dying day, and fitted him for the epitaph that J. R. Green desired, "He died, learning." When a mathematical exhibitioner at Merton he felt keenly the power of the school of religious thought in Oxford that Liddon, Dr Bright, and the Bishop of Lincoln were then illuminating there by their living example. But it was to the stimulus of Church thinking of a different type that we owe the man of spiritual insight and width of human sympathy whom his friends have loved and honoured through his later years. In 1874 he was ordained (by Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield, as he loved to remember) to a curacy at Tamworth, under the Rev. Brooke Lambert. That was probably the turning-point in his life. He was one of the quickest to feel Mr Lambert's influence of all the band of curates who found work under him—or rather with him—almost a new revelation of the meaning of religion in its application to daily life. His influence remained with him to the end as a cherished possession, and lay at the

INTRODUCTION

back of all his work, whether in the docks in Liverpool or in his second long curacy at Tamworth with his friend Mr MacGregor, whom he served with the loyalty of a passionate personal affection. It was not less strong while he was vicar of Wilnecote or rector of Trowell.

Mr Hunt was too shy, too reserved, too incisive also in the terseness of his speech, ever to become a popular man. He was far too forgetful of self, too void of ordinary ambition, too contemptuous of his own mental power to dream of seeking for success. But few thoughtful men knew him without feeling that they were with one of those "who know," and in all ranks of life the few who learnt to know him were grappled to his heart with hooks of steel.

Poetry was to him as it were the breath of life, both in the loveliness of its human expression, and in the face and phases of nature, and in the heroic and pathetic in history. Its words were constantly on his lips, its influence gave colour to his whole being. His was a short life, but as one old parishioner said, it was "a beautiful life," and another, "the straightest life I ever knew, far too straight for some of us." His ten years of marriage were of almost idyllic beauty and happiness, and the sunny smile with which he welcomed his friends was something that the saddest-hearted were forced to respond to. The spirit in which he worked and lived is best expressed in his favourite lines of Arthur Clough (he with Matthew Arnold spoke more closely to his soul than anyone), beginning—

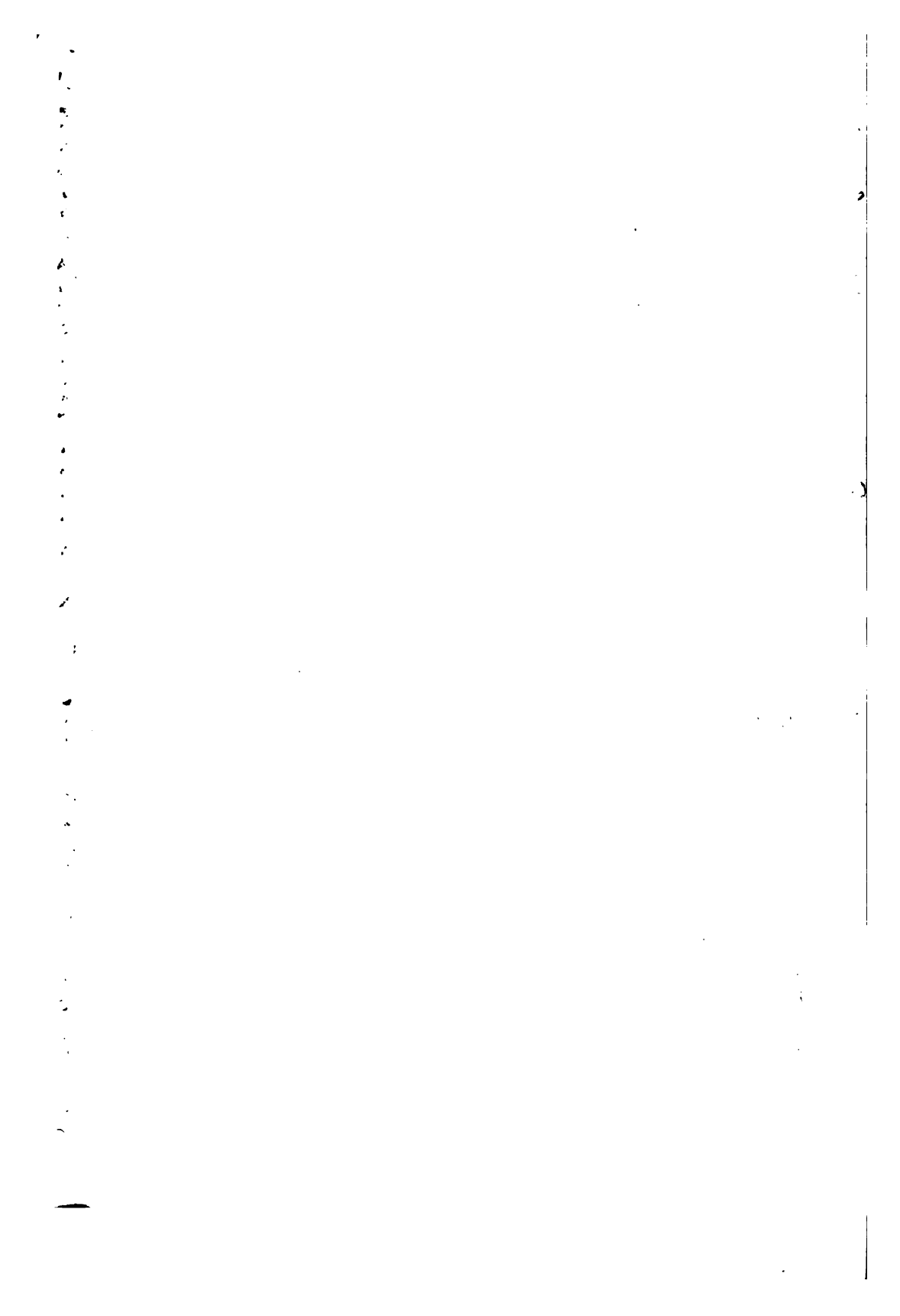
"Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
* * * * *
For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back through creeks and inlets making
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

INTRODUCTION

He was buried last Saturday at Edensor, near Chatsworth, with the family of Sir Joseph Paxton, whose youngest daughter was his wife. Lying there among the Derbyshire hills, which had always possessed a peculiar charm for him, he leaves behind at least two men to my knowledge to mourn him, who feel as if they were—

“The divided half of such
A Friendship as had mastered time.”

H. J. D.



THE MOATED GRANGE

It lies in an untrodden valley in the heart of England—for even in the very heart of England such valleys are still to be found, where the call of the bird has not been silenced by the shriek of the steam-whistle, and where the sky is not clouded, nor the air fouled, with smoke. Of the situation of this particular valley I shall give no clearer hint, for I would fain keep its pathways untrodden for a few years more, and its profound peace unbroken. How I stumbled upon it and its Moated Grange was on' this wise: He and I, being parsons in a somewhat dreary Midland town, are wont to indulge in a habit much to be commended to all parsons so placed; on Saturdays we take what, after Goldsmith, we call "a shoemaker's holiday." "Come, my dear boy," said Goldsmith to one of his friends, after an early morning's work (such a morning's work it was, too—the ten lines of the "Deserted Village" beginning with "Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease"); "come, and if you are not better engaged, I would be glad to enjoy a shoemaker's holiday with you." Then off through the fields they went to Highbury Barn, where was a very good dinner to be had for tenpence, including a penny for the waiter; on again, getting a dish of tea somewhere else; and so back to town at last, and supper in Fleet Street, "the whole expenses of the day's *fête* being from three-and-sixpence to four shillings, for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation." We began our "shoemaker's holiday" by making in the

THE MOATED GRANGE

train for a famous hill—a hill whose fame is at least known throughout the Midlands—whose slopes are still clothed with remnants of that primeval forest which once shaded so large a tract of mid-England. The hill is enclosed now—private property—but on a “shoemaker’s holiday” we are so far communists as to reck little of restrictions; so, turning out of the high road, not far from the railway station, we passed by a lane and over a fence into the wood, no man hindering us, and then through sylvan glades ascending, where once Gurth tended his swine while Wamba gibed, and where now fell softly the shine and shadows of the fair February day, we reached the summit. Then, and not till then, we were confronted by a notice-board threatening vengeance on trespassers; but what could the most law-loving of citizens do then, except, like the King of France, go down the hill again?—and that, notice or no notice, it was our fixed purpose to do when we had looked about us for a while. But not by the same side as we had ascended. Smoking chimneys lay in that direction still visible, and the great wheels of the mines. We would lose ourselves in the unknown valleys beyond. So, having taken our bearings, we plunged into the wood again by another track. Near by, where this at last gave upon a high road, stood what was to be our “Highbury Barn”—a lone ale-house, whose sign-board spoke of old forest days. In such a place, had it only been on the Berkshire moors, one might have found “on the warm ingle bench” the scholar-gipsy “seated at our entering.” Here we made our mid-day meal, at a less cost than Goldsmith his—sevenpence each, and no penny to the waiter, for waiter there was none other than mine host. But who is this that enters upon us, contentedly munching our bread and cheese?

THE MOATED GRANGE

"The outlandish garb, the figure spare,
The dark vague eyes and soft abstracted air"

proclaim to us that here indeed *is* the scholar-gipsy, strayed thus far from his accustomed haunts. Shyly he stole in and spread out his poor lean hands to the fire, as though he would have gathered in his grasp some stock of warmth to carry away with him. Shyly he had stolen in, and suddenly, at a word from mine host, he vanished. Who was he? Mine host reckoned he was a tramp, making belike for Leicester and work. We knew better—knew that he looked not for work, but "waited for the spark from heaven to fall"; and that at night, far from towns, he "would seek the straw in some sequestered grange"—in the Moated Grange itself, perhaps, to which we have been so long in coming. But courage! we are very near it now. Yet just one glance at another of the company before we pay our sevenpence and go. To the scholar-gipsy succeeded another character we knew—Granfer Cantle, of "The Return of the Native," or his Midland cousin; like him, with the "voice of a bee up a flue," and with a face that seemed at first to be "merely a nose and a chin," he came in with tottering gait and doubled back. But under the inspiring influence of fire, small-beer, and appreciative company—consisting, besides ourselves, of two stolid countrymen—his well-known merry way came back to him, and he would fain turn to ridicule for our benefit the frailties of Gaffer Somebody-else, who lived "t' other side th' wood." "He be a crofflin' old thing, he be; he goes a' this way, be danged if he don't—hee! hee! hee!" And the abandoned old mimic got up and hobbled round the room chuckling, his back now one shade more bent by art than it had been by nature before, and his tread shakier. What further excesses of merriment he indulged in I cannot record, for at this point we departed. Behind the ale-

THE MOATED GRANGE

house, a pathway led through another and a smaller wood, and over another and a lower hill. Beyond the wood, the valley of the Moated Grange lay at our feet in all its perfect stillness; no sound was in the air but that of liquid music descending to earth from some invisible fount of song above us; no sign of life was visible, till on the uplands, far away across the valley, we descried a solitary husbandman guiding his plough through the rich red soil. In the bed of the valley was the Moated Grange—a motley group of buildings, grey and red; and forsaking our pathway, which turned now to meet the high road again, we made straight for it across the fields.

The Grange was once a Prior's lodging, and it is still backed by the ruined tower and south wall of the Priory Church. West of it, a tiny stream babbles down the valley, which, banked up to the north of the church, forms a lake that once supplied the good monks' Lenten fare; its unruffled surface now reflects the bushes that have grown up round its banks, the ivy-covered tower, and the clouds that float lazily over the enchanted valley, the pictured life of shadows below being hardly stiller than the substantial life above. Approaching from the west we crossed the stream by stepping-stones, and, passing between the church and the lake, came round to the eastern side, where the moat, which encloses all the buildings, is crossed by a little bridge. Over this we passed, and found ourselves in the close in front of the Grange. What a picture it is! The house of grey stone, patched here and there with brick, all overgrown with tangled creepers and surmounted by tall red-brick chimneys, above which, again, tower the ruins of the church. It is a farmhouse now—at least, I suppose it is, for there are farm buildings and sheds all round, but of living labourers no sign, and—

THE MOATED GRANGE

"The broken sheds look sad and strange,
Unlifted is the clinking latch,
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange."

As we stood there, a regiment of cows came leisurely in single file along the valley from their pasturage, as if for the evening milking; but what voice called them home, or whose hands would milk them, unless the ghostly voice and hands of some lay brother long dead, we could not guess. The leader of the file stood still as she caught sight of us, struck motionless with amazement at so unwonted an appearance as men of flesh and blood presented. But now we tried "the clinking latch," and hammered at the Grange door, for we would fain get some information as to our further way. Our blows only echoed and re-echoed sadly through the seeming empty house. Mariana of the Midlands, if there were one, like her sister of the eastern fens, knew that "He" had not come, and cared nothing for "the voices that called her from without." The shadows were lengthening, and the "clanging rookery" began to stream homeward from afar across the sky. We must be gone, and leave the place to its ghostly guardians.

We had a vague idea that somewhere to the east lay a large manufacturing town, whence the train might carry us home. In that direction we set our faces, yet turned once more on the brow of the hill that shut in the valley on that side; and, as we turned, the sound of a church bell was floated to our ears by the evening breeze. Mariana perhaps heard it in her lonely chamber in the dreamy house, and solaced herself with the thought that—

"Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At length it ringeth to evensong."

But for us the day had been neither long nor weary, but full of the charm that George Eliot somewhere says all February days have about them, when the beautiful year lies all before one, full of promise.

A MIDLAND STUDY

IN the heart of that Warwickshire country that George Eliot loved so well there is a ridge of rising ground overlooking two valleys—one to the east and one to the west—to which the fates have dealt out widely different lots. Over the western valley fire and brimstone hold sway; not rained upon it, however, from the Lord out of heaven, but called up by man from the earth, or from the regions under the earth. One looks over this land of the plain, and lo! the smoke of the country goes up as the smoke of the furnace. Not many years ago it was as fair a stretch of champaign as you could wish to see, well wooded and well watered as a garden of the gods. The trees are now but blackened stumps that lift up bare, protesting arms to the heavens; and if one here and there so far forgot itself as to struggle into its green bravery to greet what it remembers to have been once the happy springtime, the effect but suggests the thought of some withered old hag bedizening herself with a little cheap finery, and is unspeakably sad; and in a week or two the old tree acknowledges its folly, and gives up its small pretence of gaiety. And the river that was once clear as crystal, the home of trout and grayling, the haunt of the kingfisher and ouzel, now sends down between its slimy banks a stinking, inky fluid, in which no living thing can find a home. Here is the rattle of the railway and the shriek of the steam-whistle; here are chemical works and coal-pits, and cottages of dirty-coloured brick in many a long unlovely row.

The eastern valley still sleeps in its primitive simpli-

A MIDLAND STUDY

city; thatched, half-timbered cottages, whose gardens are gay with old-fashioned flowers, nestle in its recesses, with here and there a substantial warm-coloured farmhouse, and its great rick-yard well stocked. All down the valley runs a little brook with merry babble; and by its side you may be listening and hear scarce another sound than its ripple at your feet, and the cawing of the rooks overhead; though ever and again, when the west winds blow, some evil odour or some evil sound comes over the dividing ridge from the western valley.

And widely different as is now the outward appearance of these two valleys, so, too, does the manner of the men who inhabit them differ. In the western valley men have congregated from all parts of the Midlands, bound together or to the place by no sentimental tie, but only by the grim need of earning money. So far they are all in one class. Apart from their work, they fall mainly into two classes—those who take to drink, and those who take to religion, or have “got religion,” as their phrase runs; but, whichever be their choice, they like it spicy and strong; the old-fashioned, sleepy, village inn suits them not, nor does the old-fashioned, sleepy, village church. There is nothing of repose about the “Railway Hotel” or about “Ebenezer,” which display their rival attractions over against one another in the main street of the village. Sacred names and words rise lightly to the lips of the frequenters of either place of resort, invoked as upon Ebal and Gerizim—for cursing here, for blessing there. Between them there is no impassable gulf fixed, and the passage from the company of Ebal to that of Gerizim, or *vice versa*, is easily and frequently made, and that by the same individual; so that it is not altogether to be wondered at if these opposing strains sometimes get a little mixed, as they seem to have been in the mind of that collier who, deplor-

A MIDLAND STUDY

ing the untimely death of his offspring by measles, and with a fine sense of the waste of the budding power wrought therein, remarked: "The little beggar wer' gettin' to be a bonnie swearer; and now he's among t' angels."

But come with me now across the hill into the eastern valley. Here life moves with a slower tread, and all relics of the past have not yet been obliterated: one may still, though rarely, come across a smock-frock and knee-breeches; or a labourer's wife who yet retains something of the all-but-forgotten grace of "courtesying." Money flows less freely amongst the folk here than amongst their neighbours of the west; yet, with less of coin, there is, as a rule, more of comfort. We have to penetrate some way into the recesses of the valley to discover its chief glory—the old Manor Farm. It is a fine Queen Anne house, though much dilapidated now; and a wilderness of garden now surrounds it, whose paths, once of gravel, are now so overgrown with weeds as almost to rival with greenery the great grass walk that runs through the garden's midst, guarded by two long, black, solemn lines of yew. Here dwells a fine old specimen of that soon-to-be-extinct race—the race of yeomen; and here (in this house or its predecessors) from times immemorial his forefathers have lived and died; but soon, alas! the place shall know their name no more, for my old friend has neither kith nor kin nigher than some far-off cousin. I fear me that I regard this cousin with but little Christian charity; albeit that he is a sober "citizen of credit and renown." For many a time as I sit chatting with old "Then-a-days"—so I call him from the phrase which is ever on his lips when he begins to contrast, as often he is wont, the fashions of the days that are no more with those of "nowadays"—many a time a vision of the changes that must shortly be passes before me; and I see the grass-walk dug up, and the

A MIDLAND STUDY

garden weeded, hedges clipped, and trees cut down; the old diamond-paned windows, and the ivy which almost hides them, gone; and belike, the panelled walls papered, fresh paint and plaster and whitewash everywhere reigning supreme. Honesty compels me to confess that the change will not be altogether for the bad; for old "Then-a-days" seems to think, with the Irishman, that, posterity having done but little for him, he need do but little for posterity; and did he live another fifty years (would that it were possible!) he would hand over to posterity only a ruined house, surrounded by acres of uncultivated land. Yet, methinks, when the worthy linen-draper has come into possession, that it will not be possible, as it is now, to sit on this broken-down seat in Yew-tree walk, and people the garden with

" Many a ghostly group
Of dames and squires, that were born
In tea-cup times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn."

Amongst these ghosts there is one that is wont to take a somewhat more definite shape than the others. It is a youth "with modest looks, and clad in homely russet-brown." For hither, from his own Welsh hills, the gentle singer of "The Fleece" and "Grongar Hill" was wont to come, a century and a-half ago, wooing a daughter of this house. I think of those lovers of old, pacing hand-in-hand up and down this green alley, or wandering through the meadows to the crest of the ridge—like to his own "Quiet" and "Pleasure."

" Grass and flowers Quiet treads
On the meads and mountain-heads,
Along with Pleasure, close allied,
Ever by each other's side."

Peace-loving, fleece-loving Dyer, who now remembers thee and "thy modest lay"? though Gray affirmed that

A MIDLAND STUDY

"Mr Dyer has more of poetry in his imagination than almost any of our number"; and Wordsworth promised that "a grateful few should love thee as long as shepherd tended his flock on Snowdon's Waste," and "long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill." But, famous or forgotten, it matters not much to thee now; for "thou from earth art gone long since, and in some quiet church-yard laid," side by side with the wife thou tookest to thyself from the Manor Farm.

When, after some such Old World musings, I mount the dividing ridge again to look down on the western valley, so full of life and noise and fire and smoke, I seem to hear the spirit of the new age rebuking this backward gaze.

"Loiterer! why sittest thou
Sunk in thy dream?
Tempts not the bright new age?
Shines not its stream?
.
See on its glowing cheeks
Heavenly the flush."

But then the thought comes again:

"Ah! so the silence was,
So was the hush."

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

STAFFORDSHIRE would not be the first of English counties to which a man in search of the picturesque would turn his steps. Probably it would be one of the last: for its name carries with it the thought of that Black Iron Country over which towers a "pillar of cloud" by day, and a "pillar of fire" by night; or it suggests that still drearier region of the pottery towns through which you may walk, I believe, for a dozen miles along one unlovely street, paved and gas-lighted throughout its whole hideous length, and with no break in it to tell where one dismal township ends and its dismaller neighbour begins. Yet here and there, even in the midst of the dirt and desolation of the Potteries, the traveller may catch glimpses, in spite of man's defacing fingers, of spots where nature's beauty lingers—to adapt Byron. And a very short distance from the Potteries—still within sight, indeed, of their smoke, and almost within sound of their machinery—you strike a wide tract of country where beauty not only lingers, but where, hand-in-hand with solitude, reigns undisturbed, except for such disturbance as those not very distant sights and sounds may bring.

Not very long ago two travellers, who had more than once noted from the railway the capabilities of this region, alighted at a little roadside station, bent on pushing their explorations up a certain valley hitherto unknown to fame, but known locally as the Valley of the Dane. The village, from which this railway station takes its name, though it lies at some little distance, is just such

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

an, one as the man of many toils looks at with fond eyes, fancying that its peace profound has never been, can never be, disturbed. Black care (so he thinks) may seat itself in the railway train and rush past, but here it has no abiding place.

“ The world so full of dreary noises,
The men with wailing in their voices,
The delved gold, the wailer's heap,”

seem all so far away. Yet the local guide-book informs us that one of those sleepy-looking gravestones in the grass-grown churchyard has a tale to tell of love and death as tragic as any that the great town could unfold. The inscription on it runs this wise, they say: “Thomas, son of Thomas and Mary Meaykin, interred July 16th, 1781, aged 21 years. As a man falleth before wicked men, so fell I. *βιά θανάτος.*” History does not recall the name of the village “Porson” who composed this epitaph; but it does tell how the unlucky youth here immortalised went out to seek his fortune in some not far distant town. There he became apprenticed to a tradesman, and, like many another ‘prentice, fell in love with his master’s daughter. The furious father took savage vengeance on this presumption; the boy was drugged and buried alive. But the murder came out before long; the body was disinterred and found face downwards in the coffin, contorted with agony. Picture the nightmare horror of that awakening as from sleep: the thick, still darkness, the frantic attempt to thrust out the arms, to rise; the immeasurable distance of the glad light of life and day, though only six feet above one’s head! But that was a hundred years ago: the poor boy is at rest now, and his dust, removed hither by his friends, mingles with theirs in their own churchyard.

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

But, turning away from the village and the railway and the high-road, we strike the towing-path of an old canal—long fallen out of use. A little water still lies in its bed; its banks are all overgrown with greenery; the tall reeds bow themselves gracefully before the breeze and shimmer in the brilliant sunshine. The canal soon turns out of the wide valley through which the railway goes, into the narrow one that runs from it up into the heart of the hills, and down which comes merrily the Dane. The opposite side of the valley is clothed with thick woods; there are woods, too, on this side, but broken by the line of the canal and by many an open glade and upland pasturage with its

“few cattle looking up askance
With ruminant meek mouths and sleepy glance”;

and the whole valley is filled with the song of birds and the sound of running water. Frowning down upon the valley, at the far end of it, is the jagged edge of the Roaches; and insignificant though their actual height may be, they stand so imposingly over the valley as to give it quite an Alpine look. Following the towing-path we come at last upon some sign of human dwellers in this glen. It is an old lock; and how many years have passed since its gates turned upon their hinges who shall say? By it stands a pretty cottage—the lock-house once—overgrown with roses, and its tiny garden, which squeezes itself between house and lock, filled with old-world flowers. Beyond the lock is a basin, wherein now rests a water-logged barge—No. 45 it proclaims itself. Does this mean that once upon a time four-and-forty barges (at least) besides itself plied merrily up and down this valley? And if so, in the name of all that is mysterious, what was their errand, and where are they now? and when did this “rebellion of '45” come to

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

pass, and the old barge strike work for ever and a day? It is still chained, as though there were some chance of its breaking from its moorings; and the bargee, when he fastened it up for the night, little guessed, perhaps, that he was so doing for the last time! How seldom any of us *do* know when some familiar duty is being done for the last time! But, whenever and however it happened, so it was that the old barge had made its last journey and found its last resting-place. May we all find as fair a one and peaceful! What peace profound!—the rose-embowered cottage, the old lock, with its “still water between the walls,” the wooded glen and the eternal hills, and over all the “blue far above us, so blue and so far.” At the gate of the garden stood a little maiden, sole guardian of the glen this day. Mother had gone to market, and father was at work; brothers and sisters she had at school, and “we’n buried one.” I like that periphrasis for death, which the peasant always uses; there is a certain pathos about it. We are content to say of this one or that—brother or sister it may be, husband, wife, or child—So-and-so died; died, and there was an end of it. Not so the peasant; his phraseology takes count of something after death—dwells ever with a lingering fondness upon the poor lifeless clay, and the pious duty that is still to be done for that. Here, perhaps, some pride mingled with fondness. Proud memories of the frock with crape, and the black bordered pocket-handkerchief, and the tall black coach with the nodding plumes. But no! this last could hardly have been one among the memories of the day; for no road that we could discern approached this dwelling, save the waterway of the canal: haply this dead one was drifted Elaine-like down the valley in a barge to her burial. But we must not linger over-long, fascinating though the stillness be, and this artless prattle of the family story. Not very

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

far beyond the weedy lock and the rose-embowered cottage we caught sight through the trees of a great building. Presently we came to a space clear of wood, and the building disclosed itself at the further end of the clearing. It was a huge many-storeyed mill, just such an one as you may find without much seeking any day in Staffordshire, but which came upon us in this particular corner of Staffordshire with a shock of surprise. Yet it was not altogether out of keeping with its surroundings; if it was not in itself a building much to be admired for glory and for beauty, there was, at least, nothing about it to profane this sanctuary of silence in which we found it. Rather did its presence enhance the charm of the stillness. Has not Hood taught us, in one of the noblest of sonnets, that the true home of silence is not to be found in the desert or the deep sea or the grave, but within the "desolate walls of antique palaces, where man hath been." Here was the secret of canal and of barge No. 45. But the sound of the grinding is hushed now, and the silver threads loosed, and the wheels broken: the mill is deserted. And, as the years go by, that kindly tender of the dead, Dame Nature, will cast her fair mantle of green over the unsightly bricks and mortar, do for them what she is already doing for the old barge and the canal, and here will be as picturesque a ruin as any antique palace of them all.

It was at this point that, as we viewed it from its opening, our valley had seemed to end. End, however, it did not, but turned sharply to the left, making a detour round a spur of the hills, which we, forsaking the lower ground, proceeded to mount. From the height we turned to bid farewell to our valley: we left it with the mid-day hush upon it and the mid-day haze; the denser haze in the background we recognised, alas! as the smoke of the

A STAFFORDSHIRE VALLEY

Potteries. Then we turned our backs upon it and faced forward. Beyond the ridge the river came into view again; and here at our feet was an exquisite little dell sending down a clear mountain rivulet, its tribute to the Dane! On this contributory stream we bestowed the name of the "Danegeld." Herein we followed a practice common to all discoverers, but which has oftentimes astonished one by its arrogancy. In the matter of the "Danegeld," let our excuse be that we could find no native of whom we might learn its name; and that the name we did venture to bestow upon it was suggested by a combination of historical and geographical associations, not by any vainglorious desire to perpetuate our own fame as its discoverers. But with the "Danegeld," any claim we had to be considered as discoverers came to an end: we had presently mounted the highest ridge of the Roaches. Others besides ourselves have passed through the curious earthquake-wrought gorge of Ludchurch; others besides ourselves have looked over this wide extending view; royalty itself, indeed, has done so, as a slab let into the rock informs us. Away to the north-east—lost to view in the valleys, appearing again upon the bare hilltops—runs the great high-road to Buxton; and due east is the village which we hope to make ere nightfall—Hartington, in Derbyshire, where begins the classic ground of the Valley of the Dove.

THE STRIPLING THAMES

KNOWN to all the world is the Thames between Oxford and Richmond; and to the smaller world of Oxford men in whom still lives the memory of their freshman days, the Thames, for some little way above Oxford, say to Godstow or Eynsham, is not unfamiliar. But who knows the baby-river that ripples pure and peaceful through lonely Wiltshire meadows, and then between the westernmost lowlands of Oxfordshire and Berks! Yet the Thames in his childhood has charms that the grown-up river knows not; and if there be any in these bustling days who "love retired ground," let them seek and find the solace of silence on the waters of the Upper Thames.

A boat can be sent down by Salter from Oxford to the highest point on the river where boating is possible: sleepy Wiltshire Cricklade—Cricklade which is reported to wake up now and again in the hunting season, but which I have only seen in the restful summer-time; and then Cricklade is jealous of aught that disturbs her rest. In Cricklade it may take some hours to get your boat launched in a silvery willow-shaded pool that lies at the bottom of the inn garden; the pool, little as one might guess it, being nothing less than a backwater of the River Thames. Once launched and out of this little backwater, you now speed swiftly down some clear-running reach, and now you labour slowly through waters all overgrown with weed, and now again across shallows where the keel grates upon the clean shingly bed, and where, mayhap, if the water is low, you will have to descend into it and so pass the boat over, eased

THE STRIPLING THAMES

of your weight. So have I dreamily spent the long summer afternoon: seeing no other sign of life than the mild-eyed cattle give as they graze the "wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills." We have passed by Eisey and Castle Eaton and the grey tower of Kempford Church, with the ruined wall of Kempford House low down by the river bank. We have marked where the Churn and the Cole and the Colne swell the waters of the Thames—coming down, this last, from Fairford with the Albert Durer windows: rivers notable almost as the Thames himself in those early days, but destined to merge all their hopes of fame in his. Near by the junction of the last of them stands Inglesham Roundhouse, marking the lock by which the Thames and Severn Canal enters the river; a busy place of toll, one supposes, in the old days, on this then much frequented waterway from east to west, but deserted now, as all things seem deserted in this still valley.

And now, as the evening shadows lengthen, turning to look ahead we catch sight of Lechlade spire, at first to the right of us, then to the left, as the river windeth at its own sweet will. Before long we are passing under Lechlade bridge, and call a halt for the night. We make our way through a village sad and grey and sleepy—Gloucestershire Lechlade, sleepier even than Wiltshire Cricklade—up to the village inn; and then, while supper is being prepared, turn into the churchyard hard-by haunted by the shade of Shelley. Here, on some such evening more than seventy years ago, he watched the

"Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen."

In the morning light Lechlade looks cheerier, but hardly more alive than over-night; and so we leave it to its

THE STRIPLING THAMES

greyness and its rest, and are hurried along eastward on the ever-growing river. Soon comes the gentle excitement of passing through the first lock on the Thames, St John's Bridge lock; and Buscot lock, not many hundred yards beyond it, the second. The same quaint old locksman works them both, hobbles across the meadow round which the river bends, and, in spite of rheumatism, is at Buscot almost as soon as the boat. Lazily we watch him as he slowly winds up the paddles of the lock; lazily we listen to the drowsy murmur of the summer day which now begins to fill the air; and lazily we wonder what our poor old locksman, to whom the passage of one boat a week must bring unwonted effort, would do could he suddenly be set down to superintend some lively lock on the lower river — Boulter's or Cookham; so different is the race of locks-men in these remote waters from the smart specimens we know below. But soon after leaving him we are roused to full wakefulness by the necessity of shooting Hart's Weir, the deepest unlocked fall upon the Thames. Then we go by Eaton Hastings, boasting a church than which there are surely few smaller and none more quaint in all England; and so on down sleepy, peaceful reaches shut in by rush-grown banks to Radcot Bridge: Radcot Bridge, quiet as all else now, but which more than once in our fair island's story has rung with the clash of armed men. Dim memories hang about it of "old unhappy far-off things," of "battles long ago," between the unruly barons of the ill-starred Richard II.; and memories later, and somewhat clearer, of skirmishes here between Cavaliers and Roundheads. Here, too, between Radcot and New Bridge, some miles below, the Berkshire bank is haunted by the memory of that unhappy little band of Cromwell's corporals who wandered along it seeking passage one Monday morning in

THE STRIPLING THAMES

May near two and a half centuries ago. "Levellers" they called themselves, but were destined to learn the impossibility of levelling down a born king of men. Between the devil and the deep sea, as it were, they found themselves that morning; Cromwell and Fairfax following hard on their heels behind, and the deep flowing river in front; they try to cross by New Bridge, but find it already seized; they ride on by the river side, and at last find a crossing, perhaps by Radcot Bridge; so on the Monday night they reached one of these quiet Gloucestershire villages, and there, full weary, lay down to sleep. But their pursuer never slept on unfinished work. At midnight he is upon them. Next day the little church and the head-stones of the graves look on a dreadful sight. The mutineers are placed upon the leads of the church to watch, whilst one by one those of them on whom the lot of death had fallen are brought down and set against the churchyard wall and shot. One can picture the crowd of rustics looking on in wonder; and it is easy to fancy what food for talk that morning's work would give for many a year to come in the village alehouse.

But the river banks have long forgotten these disturbers of their peace. Rushy Weir and Tadpole Bridge and Duxford Ferry and Bablock-Hythe—the very names of them speak peace profound: at the last, in the tiny inn by the ferry, one may find a bed for the second night on the Upper Thames. The ferry is on the road between Cumnor and Stanton Harcourt, names that tell us of the nearing neighbourhood of Oxford. Here, too, we are in the country that the scholar-gipsy made his own. Do we not know how—

"Him at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock Hythe,
Trailing in the cool stream his fingers wet
As the punt's rope chops round."

THE STRIPLING THAMES

And across the river there lie the "green muffled Cumnor Hills," whose "shy retreats" he loved to haunt, But now we enter upon waters that wake within us old Oxford memories. Before the third day's sun is hot we are passing under Eynsham Bridge, and we begin to remember with a little shame the meadow hard-by, where of old the don-defying Merton men were wont to hold their "horse grinds"; and so on to Godstow and the "three lone weirs"—Godstow, where the mind is divided between the ruined nunnery on one side and the snug little Trout Inn on the other.

But now the spires and towers of Oxford come full in view as we pass by Port Meadows; then they are lost again as we enter an unknown country of Oxford slums at the back of the railway station; till at last we shoot under Folly Bridge into the River of Oxford life—the river of stately barges and slim racing-boats, the river whose childhood and youth are past, and who enters here upon the larger world of manhood, labour, and fame.

A COTSWOLD IDYLL

IN a dell on a spur of the Cotswold Hills nestles the little grey village of Deepdene. So we will name it. Beyond the reach of telegraph or railway, careless, perhaps unconscious, of the rapid march of civilisation in these last days, the villagers live as their rude forefathers lived a hundred years ago. Here, over the bleak fields that surround Deepdene, the "winds sweep and the plovers cry," but Time and the Great World go by and leave the place unchanged. What recks Deepdene of wars and rumours of wars, of the policies and plans of Governments; there are more important things than these to give the dwellers there food for thought. Every morning the sun arises, and man goes forth to his labour until the evening; the seasons come and go; children are born, young men and maidens keep company, and the old folks die; and Deepdene thinks and talks of these things.

In one matter, and one only, does Deepdene keep abreast of the times. Even to these regions so remote the examination system has penetrated: examination not only in matters so mundane as reading, writing, and arithmetic; but Deepdene nourishes young theologians in her midst, heterodox as well as orthodox, who once in every year display their learning before the diocesan inspector, or by him have their errors timely checked. It was at such a yearly ceremony that we made acquaintance with Deepdene. The inspector's nearest approach by train left still many a long mile between him and his prey to be done on foot; and he had beguiled us

A COTSWOLD IDYLL

to accompany him on his walk: a fair walk it was, through a rich well-wooded land, and bright then with the fresh green tints of early June and gay with apple-blossom. Through fat, low lands encircled by stately hills, you go, till the hills seem suddenly to close upon you, and their ascent begins. As you turn now and again to look over the valley you are leaving, an ever-widening prospect opens out till it reaches even to the distant Channel, where

“ Twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea water passes by,
And hushes half of babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.”

One thing only marred the pleasures of this walk. About the time when men who have breakfasted early and journeyed far begin to think of lunch, we found ourselves in a land where lunch is hard to come at; but here rules a lord of the soil who has strong views on the temperance question, and suffers no public-house to rear its brazen front in his domain. At last, however, a cottager was discovered who bade the weary travellers welcome, and set before them stores of bread and bacon and home-brewed cider. Him did the inspector, after his manner, catechise as to the effects of the landlord's repressive measures upon the morals of the place; and it is grievous to have to record that a sardonic smile of malicious satisfaction lit up his features as he extracted the admission that drunkenness was not unknown here, and, indeed, no more uncommon than in some village far away known to our host, where a public-house was permitted to exist.

From among the woods which thickly clothe the Cotswolds' western slopes the road somewhat suddenly emerges upon the bare, treeless tract that forms their summit: you cross a field or two, and the Deepdene

A COTSWOLD IDYLL

Dell, with its sad-looking grey cottages, lies in front of you. Pre-eminent among the other buildings for grey-ness, for sadness and for size is the National School; and here the theology embodied in about sixty small rustics sits brushed up and all-expectant. The inspector sets to work, and his companion rests his weary limbs in the most upright and unaccommodating of chairs and prepares to listen. And very pleasant it was to watch the infants, with whom the work began, fold their little hard brown hands and close their clear blue eyes, and to hear them lisp out the Lord's Prayer. What if the words did run together into unintelligible jumbles after the first two. "Our Father" at least, sounds out plainly from the lusty little throats; "which 'chartyneaven," it goes on, and so to the end. From a train of dreams suggested by the first words of the prayer in the mouth of these young rustics, the onlooker was rudely startled as there fell on his ears a question ominous of the storms that gather round the base of the mountain to whose serene summit the infants' voices had uplifted him.

"Who made Satan?" What had led up to this question history may never now record; but its result was that a silence fell upon the school, and for a time no hand was raised to indicate a power of reply. At last, however, with a calm deliberation such as might have betokened undying defiance to the anathemas of the orthodox and the fires of the Inquisition, a sturdy young Manichæan once more enunciated, here in the sanctuary of Anglican orthodoxy, the doctrine of an independent Principle of Evil: "Please, zur, 'ee maade 'izelf." The inspector did not please, but was far too wary to descend from his catechetical place of vantage to take ground as an apologist and give reasons for the orthodox faith that was in him as to the genesis of evil.

Or ever the onlooker's thoughts could wander again,

A COTSWOLD IDYLL

they were arrested by the startling contrast one face in the little company presented to those round about. The face of a girl, oval in shape, dark in hue, with features most delicately cut and shrouded in raven hair. How came it among these fair-skinned, freckled, light-haired, coarsely-moulded English rustic children? The on-looker's interest, once aroused, was held not only by her appearance but by her demeanour during the examination. Whilst it was confined to Church documents, whilst the questions were only of Prayer Book and Catechism, this girl seemed to belie the promise of keen intelligence in her face, and sat listless and uninterested; but when once the wider ground of the Bible was reached, her face was aglow with animation, and her raised hand with its long tapering fingers craved permission to reply to every question which the inspector could put. Shyly but surely she threaded her way, where all others had stumbled, through the wanderings of the Israelites, the genealogies of the Kings, and the journeys of St Paul. The girl's riddle was partly read when the schoolmistress volunteered the information that she was the daughter of a Baptist minister who makes his abode in Deepdene. The spectator could not but congratulate the inspector that she was of too refined a nature to be possessed by the vulgar lust of controversy: for had she been so possessed, he might have found in her a still more awkward customer than in that one of the same persuasion—of whom he had been telling by the way—to whom he had, in all innocence, addressed that question out of the Catechism, "Why, then, are infants baptised, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?" requesting her to record the answer on her slate; but the slate, when held up for inspection, displayed only the scornful retort, "Why indeed?" Not such was she of Deepdene. We had been prepared to endure two

A COTSWOLD IDYLL

hours of weariness; but, behold! the inspection was finished ere weariness had shown any sign of setting in.

Nothing now remained but the homeward journey; and by way of varying that, it was determined to make for a town lying away to the east of the hills. But only one man in Deepdene had ever penetrated so far into the world or was capable of directing the travellers; and who should that be but the father of our little Baptist maiden. If the sight of him did not remove the mystery of the child's refinement, it at least thrust it one step further back. No question now of where *her* refinement came from; for with its gentle dreamy eyes and soft, dark, silken hair and beard—hair that fell in long curls upon the shoulders—his was a head that a halo might well have crowned, and one that any painter would have gloried in as a model for a St John. Though he took the two far on their road and conversed much, yet the secret of his life at Deepdene must remain a secret ever: all that we can record is our conviction that though the rustics of Deepdene know nothing of the great world lying round about them, yet they cannot fail to catch glimpses of some higher and nobler world so long as the Baptist minister and his little daughter dwell amongst them.

A QUIET CORNER ON THE SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

THERE are many famous and fashionable watering-places on the Sussex coast, but none of them can surpass in picturesqueness or rival in interest the quaint little fishing-village of Bosham, stowed away in the westernmost corner of the county, close to the confines of Hampshire. Between Selsea Bill and Purbeck Island the sea has laid a many-fingered outstretched hand upon the land; it has torn off the Isle of Wight, and clutches greedily at further prey; the village stands at the end of one of these long and crooked fingers.

We made our first acquaintance with Bosham on a bright September morning; the sound of many waters filled the air, except where, unhappily, their music was drowned by the strains of an instrument of the hurdy-gurdy order. "The Sacred Bandomium," this strange thing proclaimed itself by a label attached to its front—the only one I hope in existence. A few children were trying to dance to its melancholy hymn tunes, and the fishermen and their wives hung about the green palings of their little gardens, lazily watching and listening. "The Sacred Bandomium" is perhaps only an occasional visitant, but the music of the waters is always to be heard in Bosham; there is "the swelling of the voiceful sea" all round about it when the tide flows in; and when the tide is low the melody is taken up by the babbling stream which "winds about and in and out" through all the village; now it runs along the side of the main street in front of the cottage gardens, bridged

A QUIET CORNER ON SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

over by many a plank or flagstone; now it dodges behind the houses and encircles the churchyard, feeding on its way the fish stews which once upon a time furnished for the good monks of Bosham their Lenten fare, but which are now, as a great board, nailed to one of the overhanging willows, informs the passer-by, the property of some "association," who threaten dire pains and penalties to all poachers upon their preserves. One other work the little stream does before "losing itself in the infinite main"—just beyond the church is the old mill whose water-wheel it works, and then its course is ended—

"The flood-gates are open, away to the sea."

It is not the men of Bosham, you may be sure, who fish its stream; fishermen indeed they are, one and all, as their fathers have been before them all through the long centuries, from the time when St Wilfrith, the Apostle of Sussex, first taught their heathen ancestors the art of fishing, and then, wise fisherman that he was, caught his pupils themselves in his Gospel net. Fishermen they are—but rough fishermen of the sea—not gentle riverside anglers. Yet not rough after the fashion of the South Saxons with whom Wilfrith had first to do. It was on his return from one of his many journeyings that this Ulysses of the seventh century found his boat stranded on the Sussex coast. It was promptly surrounded and attacked by a fierce band of wreckers. For long after all their kinsmen throughout England had accepted Christianity and the gentler manners which Christianity brought with it, the South Saxons clave to their heathenism and their piratical doings. Five men of Wilfrith's company were killed before his ship got off on the rising tide. Then Wilfrith vowed a noble revenge upon his assailants—that, God



A QUIET CORNER ON SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

willing, he would some day return and win them to Christ and civilisation. His opportunity came some few years afterwards, when, once again a wanderer and an outcast from his northern diocese, he heard that a terrible famine was ravaging Sussex. So bitter was the distress, that men and women in their despair would join hands, forty or fifty together, and, rushing into the sea, put an end to their sufferings. But Wilfrith came and taught them how much wiser it were to make the sea yield up its fish to be their food rather than give themselves to the sea as food for its fish. So he won their gratitude, and then easily made them his converts.

Even before Wilfrith's coming there was a feeble flicker of Christianity in Sussex. At Bosham Wilfrith found a tiny monastery with five or six Celtic monks. Possibly in this remote corner, surrounded on all sides by the dense forest or the waste of waters, an old British monastery had contrived to keep itself alive, renewed from time to time out of the British Church in Cornwall; if this were so, then, of all places in the land over which the English invasion spread, to Bosham belongs the unique honour of never having completely relapsed into heathenism. More probably, however, these monks were Irish, for those were the days when from Ireland went forth men of light and leading over the whole of Europe. Be that as it may, until Wilfrith came, these good monks could do no more than keep the lamp of Christianity alight amongst themselves; they could do nothing to shed its radiance over the dark places round about them. But now churches began to be built up and down the land of the South Saxons; amongst them the great church of Selsea, long ago swallowed up by the encroaching sea, and the old Basilica of Bosham, which figures in the Bayeux tapestry, and part of which remains unto this day. Bosham church appears on the

A QUIET CORNER ON SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

tapestry because of the connection which the great Godwine family had with this place. To their house at Bosham the great earl and his sons retired when they were banished from the court of the Confessor, and from Bosham it was that they took ship for Flanders, there to await happier days. From Bosham, too, Harold set out on that ill-fated cruise in the Channel, during the course of which he was driven upon the coast of Normandy, and before he could escape from the clutches of William, had the baneful oath forced upon him. But between the days of Wilfrith and those of Harold, Bosham had suffered like other places at the hands of the Dane. Tradition tells how, on one of their raids, they carried off the bell from Wilfrith's church, but were fain to throw it overboard before they got very far out to sea; and now when the bells of Bosham ring and the echo of their chiming comes back over the waters of the estuary from the Hampshire shores, the old folks say that it is the big bell of Bosham sounding from his deep-sea bed and taking his part with his fellows in the peal. The legend recalls a similar one from the opposite coast of Brittany, where the sea has swallowed up a certain village, church and all—even as here it has swallowed up Selsea Cathedral,—but the Breton sailors say that when the winds blow loud and the waves beat high, behind all the raging of the storm they hear the bells of the old church ringing, and their fears are calmed. M. Renan has used the Breton legend with all his own exquisite grace, if with something of his own exquisite egotism, when he tells us that it is even so with him—that when the storms of life beat upon him with all their force, amidst all the rage of controversy and the fret of unbelief, deep down within his soul he can catch the echoes of the half-forgotten words of the Christian creed, like the sweet bells chiming under the tossing sea, and is comforted.

A QUIET CORNER ON SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

The Danes came back to Bosham as they did to other places, and the greatest of the Danes had a castle here; and, if I am not mistaken, it was on the Bosham shore that he administered his famous rebuke to his courtiers for their flattery, according to Henry of Huntingdon's old story, which we all know so well. Canute's daughter was buried in Bosham church, and the stone coffin which contained her remains was discovered under the chancel floor not very many years ago.

The church about which so many memories hang "of old, unhappy, far-off things," stands back from the main street of the village. That ends abruptly in the sea or in the shingle when the tide is low, and the only other street in Bosham turns off from it to the right just before you come to the water's edge, and leads to the church. The sea washes up against the backs of the houses on one side of this street, and on the other side you soon come to the dark yews of the churchyard, the stream, and the overhanging willows, and

"The little grey church on the windy shore."

It is mainly a Norman building as it stands now, but part of the old Saxon work is left, and possibly some earlier work still of the Roman-British times. Anyhow, it is old enough to beguile us into the belief that we can leave the spirit of the nineteenth century behind us as we enter its portals—"this so-called nineteenth century," as the eloquent Irish curate termed it when denouncing its scepticism. But we are soon made aware of our mistake: a strange figure, looking more seaman than sexton, save that he carries the keys of office in his hand, follows close upon our steps, and prepares to act as cicerone. We willingly accept his guidance, expecting to hear the old-world village stories told in simple good faith. But the man is penetrated by

A QUIET CORNER ON SUSSEX SEA-BOARD

Zeitgeist. He tells the stories, indeed, but in a superior and condescending board-school-teacher style, adding for our behoof at the end of each, "But, of course, that there's all a legend." He is filled with historic doubts concerning the story of Canute, and indeed concerning all other stories, except, apparently, such as he deems that there may be good board-school authority for believing in: such authority does exist for the battle of Hastings, so all that may be connected with the famous day in the mind of our friend is accepted with unquestioning faith, and enunciated with calm assurance. In this spirit he informs us that "King Harold he sailed from here when he went to fight them Romans as was coming across with William the Conqueror." For alas! even board-school knowledge has its limitations; and sometimes, within those limitations even, is apt to get a little mixed. From the tower of the church you may look through the latticed windows of the belfry over a wide extent of the level lands which lie between the Sussex downs and the coast; close at hand is the estuary dotted with fishing boats, while far away at the seaward end of it you may sight the great brown sail of a collier from the North making its way up the tortuous channel, and beyond it the shimmering of the open sea. Behind you are the breezy hills, and through another window you may watch their swift change of expression as now the shadows fall upon them, and now the brilliant sunshine. It is a fair view, turn which way you may, and one would gladly linger over its beauties. But now the tide is nearly at the full, and the fishermen will have soon to tear themselves away from the strains of the "Bandomium" and betake them to their boats. We, too, must tear ourselves away with not less effort and leave Bosham to its memories of long ago and its melodies of to-day.

ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES

THE harvest is past, the summer is ended—so, at least, says the calendar. The season of tourists is gone; people are settling down again to life's "trivial round and common task"—all except two wise ones whose holiday is still unspent; for they have been hoarding it for this soft twilight season of the year, when summer's high noon and hot afternoon are gone, but winter's night yet tarries. This rich, mellow after-glow of summer's day which generally (alas! not always) displays its charms somewhere between the festivals of St Luke and St Martin, and is named sometimes after the one saint, sometimes after the other—where can one, or two, better spend it than in that loveliest valley of Wales—lovely as any "valley of Ionian lands"—which holds the estuary of the Mawddach; where every day, between Barmouth and Dolgelly, the inflowing tide turns the babbling river into a Highland loch, and "makes a silence in the hills." Hither, then, come with our two holiday-makers, ye slaves of the counter and the desk: in spirit ye may come; for your presence in the flesh they would not thank you. Leave the train at Dolgelly, and, passing through the town, ascend the slopes of Cader Idris, who towers so majestically over the whole valley. One is not sorry nowadays to turn one's back upon Dolgelly, for here the gold fever rages. Men now speak only of their mountains as mines yielding so much food for the Mint, and care nought for the garments of purple-and-gold wherewith autumn has decked them. The mountain summits may stand out wonderful and great above

ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES

the delicate veil of mist wherewith the morning enwraps their base, or glow under the last kiss of the setting sun when all the valleys are dark; but the gold-grubber will not so much as lift up his eyes unto the hills with their celestial crown, but, like the Man with the Muck-rake in the house of the Interpreter, "can look no way but downward, and give heed only to rake to themselves the stones and the dust of the floor."

Let us leave Dolgelly to its gold-grubbing, and with our two holiday-makers dream away an hour upon the slopes of Cader. The spot they most love is where, in the hollow of a pass between one of the mountain's outlying bastions and his main strongholds, lies a little lake. "The Lake of Perfect Shadows" they have named it; their Saxon tongue failing altogether to frame aright the outlandish combination of double consonants, besprinkled here and there with a *w* or *y* by way of vowel, which passes for a name in Wales. Let us take up our post on the rising ground beyond the lake, whence we can look across it at the majestic hill of Cader. Already it is fringed with snow; but in these lower passes the warmth of summer lingers. So warm is it, indeed, that one of the two can sit down comfortably to sketch, while the other lays his length on the withered bracken and dreams his dreams. Indeed, it is a fair spot in which to dream; to the left the pass opens out upon a wide plateau ending in a sharp ridge, below which fever-stricken Dolgelly is hidden from sight, though its smoke rising over the plateau's edge betrays its presence. Behind the smoke are billowy blue hills, and behind them again, as we know, the waters of Bala and the Vale of Llangollen. To the right the pass narrows and winds, and its outlet is lost to view; but beyond the hills that seem to shut it in the sky has that peculiar gleam which tells that underneath it lies

ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES

the shining sea. Ever and again, from across Mawddach's estuary to the north at our back, comes the boom of an explosion, the work of the gold-grubber; but at least he is far away and out of sight—out of mind, too, for the most part; for in front of us, as I have said, is the mighty mass of Cader, more than great enough to hold all one's thoughts; far into the blue above tower his heights, and deep into the depths of the lake beneath, inverted, they pierce. From here you get his whole outline, and understand the reason of his name Cader Idris, the Throne of Idris—Idris, the old British hero-god. A noble throne it is; the mountain's mid-peak forms its back, flanked east and west by the great ridges which are its encircling arms, and which, curving outwards and upwards, terminate in supplementary peaks hardly less grand than the centre one itself. Here, then, the old giant would "live and lie reclined," surveying his dominions as far as their utmost limits, even to the shores of the Northern Sea; while from many a hill-top round about him went up the smoke of sacrifices from the Druids' altars. Even now it would take no great stretch of the imagination, when the storm-clouds gather round the mountain-peaks, to trace the giant's form and flowing robes on his ancient throne; perchance even on a sudden to see his face "strike a glory through the mist." But the fancy will not hold long: the gods of Wales are as dead as the gods of Greece—Idris, like the rest of them:

" Gods bereavèd, gods belated.
With their purples rent asunder;
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Cader's top—
Idris is dead."

So, on the principle of the Preacher in Ecclesiastes,

ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES

that a "living dog is better than a dead lion," we turn our thought from the dead past to the living present, from the shadowy old giant who reigned long ago on the mountain summit to a very old man toiling to-day at its foot; toiling, with bent back and sweating brow, according to the primeval curse. But now the hour of his mid-day rest from work has come, we watch him as he slowly shoulders his spade and saunters to the little thatched homestead that stands at the tarn's brink. Like things are happening, as we note, in the upside-down world which we look into in the depths of the Lake of Perfect Shadows. Presently, while we are still idly dreaming, he comes out again—as does his water-double—pipe in mouth and spade on shoulder, and so to work again on his little patch of potato-ground—thinking what thoughts the while who shall say? Certainly not himself: his answer would probably be the Welsh equivalent of the northern labourer's answer to the inquiring friend who broached to him the subject of his thoughts. What did he think of through the long hours of the day? "Why, maistly nowt." But this, we believe, in our Welshman's case, would only be another way of saying that he is no poet to give expression to the thoughts that lie within him, as within most of us, too deep for words. The grandeur of his surroundings cannot have been altogether without influence on the thoughts of his heart. His dog, anyhow (inevitable companion to the Welsh labourer), has many thoughts: thinks for one thing that he will talk to his shadow on the lake; thinks for another thing that he will beguile a sober old goat tethered near to play with him, but the goat thinks not: thinks yet again that the harmless observer on the hill above means some mischief, and barks furiously: then incontinently gives it up, and goes to lie beside his master, watching him with sleepy glance, and thinking, doubtless,

ST LUKE'S SUMMER IN WALES

what a fool he is to work so hard when his dog knows how to take life so simply. So the hours of the day fly by, alas! how quickly, while the one sketches and the other dreams.

A week of such days as this might well cheat us into the belief that a longer and more certain summer than St Luke's lies before us; but a day comes when the two seek again their Lake of the Perfect Shadows, and find that it deserves the name no longer; the winds howl down the pass and ruffle all its surface: thick and ever thicker is the fall of the leaves:

“ And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
And wild the clouded gleam.”

“The rooks are blown about the sky,” and soon will the “last red leaf be whirled away.” We seem to hear

“ The Summer's parting cry
From the wet field, through the vex't mountain trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze;
'The leaves are gone, and with the leaves go I.' ”

And go must we, too, back again to the toil of the town; soon in strange contrast to the mental vision we carry with us of the old labourer on the upland farm working on his little plot of ground by the clear waters of the lake, our bodily eyes will be looking out, as the train whirls us past it, on the great sewage farm of the Midland metropolis. Here are machines without price, and men without number, whose heads, no doubt, are full of thoughts—opinions, at all events—about all things in heaven and earth. When will some Birmingham man be inspired by the neighbourhood of this great agricultural work to write another Georgic? The labourer on the Welsh hills, I deem, has more chance of writing it than he.

A PARADISE IN WALES

IT lies in the noble valley of the Conway, this Paradise, in which we, alas! are only as guests that tarry but for a day. Over against us the twin giants Carnedd Llewelyn and Carnedd Dafyd rear their mighty heads to the sky; while between them and the river-lowlands there is many a lesser peak famous in old Welsh song. The distant summits are sometimes streaked with snow even in the height of summer; but here on the Denbighshire slope of the Conway the air seems ever balmy, and the sun shines warmly even in the depth of winter. Here one of England's merchant-princes has built for himself a lordly house, and laid out for himself a fair domain; and here for some portion of every month the man of many enterprises, the moving spirit of many companies, becomes for the time the country squire, and exchanges the cares and turmoil of business for the delight and calm of landscape gardening. I know no other house within the four seas which commands so splendid a prospect. A prospect, too, which, beside its majesty of feature, has so wondrous a play of expression about it that it can never tire or oppress you as grandeur is sometimes wont to do. From the western windows of the house, and from the western garden terraces, one looks down upon a wide and shining reach of the Conway; and now he flows swiftly and cheerily to the sea, and now his course is checked and his mirth is stilled by the solemn, noiseless inflowing of the tide:

“Such a tide as, moving, seems asleep—
Too full for sound and foam.”

A PARADISE IN WALES

And the everlasting hills beyond—they, too, are ever changing. When the light of morning falls upon them, every tiny whitewashed cottage upon their slopes shines with a dazzling brightness, and the grimmer heights beyond reveal every chasm and every scar that the forces of fire and frost have wrought upon their surface. When the westering sun goes down in glory behind them, the whole ridge, its separate features all lost in shadow, rises like one vast blue barrier against the sunset sky. When the noonday sun shines out of a cloudless heaven the giants seem to be so near to you, and to be so peacefully asleep, that you are ready to believe them quite easy of access—ready to fancy that you might walk a few hundred yards and lay your hand upon their great heads and stroke their couchant limbs. And the next day, belike, they will have withdrawn themselves far away, and wrapped themselves about in garments of cloud and mist and mystery, and seem haughtily to forbid any approach of familiarity. And then again will come a day when they have disappeared altogether—a weeping rain descends like a veil between you and the mountains, and, for all that you can see, they might not exist. But here the rain does not last long. At Bettws, at the far end of the valley, tourists may be sighing wearily that “the rain it raineth every day,” while here the mountains have drawn the rain-clouds to themselves and the glory of the rainbow falls upon them. For here, as your host will tell you, he has never known, in all the years that he has known and loved the place, one single day of absolutely unbroken rain. But be that as it may, to-day, at least, “the clouds are highest up in the air,” and one could bask in the sunshine from morning until evening, feasting one’s eyes upon the scene spread out before one. But this the Squire will by no means suffer; he will have you forth with him now, that he

A PARADISE IN WALES

may show you some of the works which he so much delights in. His landscape gardening, indeed, is not carried out after the fashion of that enthusiast of "Headlong Hall," who instructs Squire Headlong in the art of improving the crude attempts of Nature to beautify his estate in Snowdonia. *Our* Squire's "improvements" never come into competition with the grand features of the view—never obtrude themselves: one has to go in search of them. There is the walk along the river, reclaimed out of its bed and raised above the reach of its tide: there are the sweeping glades hollowed out in the heart of the woods, all grass-grown and mossy: there is the hanging walk along the face of the cliff, on the top of which Gray placed his Bard, and, therefore, known as the "Poet's Cliff." But above all there is "The Dell" in all its beauty. "The Dell" is a narrow valley which a little mountain stream, a tributary of the Conway—the Erythlyn its euphonious name—has made for itself. "The Dell" runs southward from just below the house in the direction of the neighbouring village of Eglwysbach—the village, that is, of the little church. By the way, how strange it is every now and then throughout Wales to come across some "Eglwys" dropped down amongst innumerable "Llans." "Llan" is church, and "Eglwys" is, of course, the Norman equivalent. Here there is Llandudno, the Church of St Tudno, at the sea end of the valley; and Llanrwst far up in its recesses; and midway between them Eglwysbach. What a tale the little place, with its half-French and half-Welsh name, might have to tell, if we could but understand its language, of old unhappy times when some Norman over-lord strove to force his law and language upon the unwilling Celt. "What long-drawn echo of bitter rage and hate may lie in that small etymology!"

A PARADISE IN WALES

But to return to "The Dell." Forest trees still climb on its steep slopes, and the sunlight glints through their branches upon sward cleared of all undergrowth; but the bed of the little valley has been cleared of forest timber altogether, and here are shaven lawns between the water-courses, into which the Erythlyn is parted, and here grows many a rare and stately shrub. And a goodly sight it is, when the Squire will have some new shrub planted by his guests in memory of their visit, to see him cast his hat into the air, and summon the fairies of the glen to aid its growth. And verily they come. The fairies, who water all things planted here with the most genial of showers, fan them with the gentlest of breezes, and kiss them with the brightest of sunbeams. Here all life luxuriates: the thrush begins his song earlier, and gives forth that "first fine careless rapture" yet more gladly than elsewhere; the blackbird whistles more sweetly, and the squirrel skips more merrily; and the wise rooks, from their haunts in the forest trees above, lay down the law yet more authoritatively than other rooks are known to do. And here the fear of man has not fallen over all other living things; for it is not here considered a necessity of man's life that he should strive to kill time by going forth every day to kill something else.

Alas! that upon all this joy of life and all this loveliness the shadow of death should ever fall. But so it is. A massive tower dominates all the glen. Like the mummy at the Egyptian feast, it may serve to chasten our mirth; for it is the great "Tower of Silence," the family mausoleum. It is in this fair resting-place, with its variegated marbles and its richly-coloured grass, that they who now, with such living care, guard the beauties of this paradise, must some day lie.

A PARADISE IN WALES

" They will not see the shadows,
They will not feel the rain ;
They will not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain ;
But, dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply they may remember,
And haply may forget."

But be that day far distant. For the moment, at least, the saddening thought of it is swept away by the mountain breezes which blow about us; as, after inspection of the glen, we are driven by the Squire to visit some far outlying upland farm in the hills behind the house. Yet other reaches of the Conway come into view from these heights, and yet other ranges of the mountains beyond it, till at last the view in one direction reaches to the shapely cone of Moël Siabod and the triple peaks of Snowdon, and in the other to the sunlit sea. Then back to the house once more, in time to sit again on the western terrace and watch the sunset.

No bridge spans the Conway for all the many miles that lie between Llanrwst and Conway's "Tower and Town"; but just at the end of the reach we look down upon, we can espy the lumbering barge lazily plying its evening task between the ferryman's cottage in Carnarvonshire and the little inn which looks across at it from this side the river. And, with the pinnacles of the "Tower of Silence" peeping at us through the trees of the glen, we fall a-musing of the grim ferryman of the Styx, and wonder if perchance he will tell us, when we enter his barge, that he may not land us on the Elysian Fields, for that man may know but one paradise (as Mohammed felt when he would not enter Damascus), and that we have already tasted of ours once and again in this earthly Paradise in Wales.

THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE

THE verdict pronounced in his haste by the traveller, as he looks out from the train hurrying by, upon a little grey village, straggling down from the hills to the sea, at a certain point on the Welsh coast which need not be closely particularised, would no doubt be "deadly dull." Deadly dull, for beyond the village nothing but a vast extent of marshy meadow-land would meet his seaward gaze, bounded by an interminable line of low sand-dunes, which separate the reclaimed land from the shore and sea beyond. And as, according to the old Scotch minister who found it "unco' true," David might as well have spoken his opinion about human mendacity deliberately instead of hastily; so would the traveller, finding it "unco' true," feel justified in repeating at his leisure, should circumstances ever compel his tarrying here, what he had said in his haste as he passed by. At all events, the frequenter of popular seaside resorts would find here none of the usual seaside attractions—no promenade, no pier, no band, no big hotel or hydropathic establishment, no boats, no bathing-machines. Yet some know and love the little place, and would fain keep it in its undisturbed dulness. Of course there have been rainy days, when one has been constrained to mutter that—

"Here again I come, and only find
The drain-cut levels of the marshy lea,
Grey sand-banks and pale sunsets, dreary wind,
Dun shores, dense rains, and heavy clouded sea."

But the rains pass, and the charm abides. Beyond the embankment, when the tide is low, stretches a vast plain

THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE

of sand, broken up by sea pools; and sand and pools take the most wondrous colours as the cloud-shadows flit across them—yellow and golden-red, red as blood sometimes, like the pools in the Syrian desert which the kings of Moab saw, and deepest purple at last when the sun goes down into the far-off sea. No human form is to be seen on all this waste of sand, save a solitary shrimper away at the sea's edge, the only being in the village—seaside village though it is—who has his business in the great waters. In the gloaming, mysterious lights begin to appear all along the coast and out at sea, for the entrance to a great harbour is not far distant, and light-ships, as well as land-lights, mark the path to it. If the breeze is on the shore, it brings along with its health-giving blast the sound of melancholy tolling from a great bell, which ever, as it "heaves with the heaving deep," gives out its dirge, like that of the good old Abbot of Aberbrothock.

The solitude of the shore is indeed disturbed for a time when the tide is in, for then such visitors as there may be in the little place, during what it calls its season, disport themselves by or in the sea. The entertainment of those by the sea is to watch those in it, who, having undressed, in primitive fashion, among the declivities of the sandbanks, are now attired very much after the fashion of Mark Twain's happy islanders—the women wear one loose robe, and the men wear a smile. There are here no bathing-machines, as those boxes so innocent of machinery are, for some mysterious reason, called. One machine, however, there is, deeply and immovably imbedded in the sand, which belongs to the village inn; and now and again some distinguished visitor at that hostelry makes use of it, and descends therefrom to his sea-bath, a veritable *Deus ex machina*, and the admiration of all beholders. There is life, too, further out at

THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE

sea, where the porpoises are at play, and great ships go steaming by to their haven under the hill; and though the village is not a fishing-village, and possesses not a single boat, yet the fishing-smacks of neighbouring places pass and repass, and sometimes the sail of a yacht glistens in the distance, as it catches the sun, white as an iceberg.

But the interest of the place is not confined to its sea-board. The one long street of the village, which straggles for nearly a mile from the sea inland, does not indeed itself present any very remarkable feature; but it opens at its far end upon the steep, green slope of the hills. They are of no great height, these hills, and when you have breasted their summit a somewhat dreary-looking plateau lies in front of you. Nevertheless, the view to the right and left is very striking. Far away on the right, beyond the lower hills and their intersecting valleys, a splendid chain of mountains rises, crest above crest, to meet the sky. All in that direction speaks of majestic calm and peace; while in strange contrast, if you turn to the left, you see in the distance the smoke of a vast city ascending, which seems to carry with it the tale of turmoil and tears. And the plateau which lies in front, commonplace as it looks, is crowded with legendary or historic interests. It holds also, stowed away in its recesses, many beautiful bits of sylvan scenery. Close by, for instance, rises an enormous mound of earth—the work, in all probability, of some pre-historic, pre-Aryan race; but local tradition has it that this is nothing less than the burial-mound of Boadicea. In the hollow hard by—the Valley of Slaughter, as it is called—a great battle was fought, so the legend runs, in which she exterminated a Roman legion. And here it was that afterwards, in the hour of her shame and humiliation,

THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE

"the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought with an indignant mien
Counsel of her country's gods."

And here it was that by her own hands she died, and here, on the scene of her triumph, was buried. Many a great Welsh house, too, about which hangs the memory of "old unhappy far-off things," nestles in the groves or dells of the plateau. In the trees hard by is one, a fine Elizabethan mansion, once called the "House of the Bloody Hand"; for here dwelt the Warden of the Welsh and English March, and any border forayer who fell into the Warden's clutches was thrown into the dungeon, and there had his right hand struck off. Needless to say that every one of these old houses (farmhouses now, most of them) has its ghost. In one, the last great lady of an old family in high repute in these parts once, but now for long years extinct, has been seen by living and credible witnesses. She only appears, they say, when the fire burns brightly in a certain dressing-room, and an arm-chair is set thereby; but when the conditions are thus favourable, then will the shade of this old-world dame sit there by the hour, peacefully dreaming of the days that are no more.

It may well be that one lingers so long over these and such like reminiscences, that, when one turns again to descend from the plateau and regain the village, the sun is sinking to the sea behind a distant headland. Turning once, so to descend, it chanced to the writer to see such a light upon the sea and sand and marsh as, he thought, till then, could only have existed in a poet-painter's dream—"the light that never was on sea or land." A thunder-cloud of intense blackness lay over the sea, rent in twain now and again by the forked lightning; then, as the cloud drove on with the storm, the setting sun shone out from underneath it, and flooded

THE CHARMS OF A DULL PLACE

all the earth with a weird and stormy light, while high in the heaven the sunbeams struck the raindrops, which flashed back their light in rainbow hues; and we passed home through the commonplace village, transfigured in that strange glow till it shone like some New Jerusalem, whose gates and walls are set with the glory of precious stones, and whose streets are like transparent glass.

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

THE sun which shines (sometimes) upon these islands of ours—"the greater and lesser Cumbrae, and the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland"—can assuredly see no fairer sight—not even among the islands of the Western Sea, where dwelled the old minister who so framed his prayer for the Queen's dominions—than that which meets his gaze when he shines upon the valleys which nestle amongst the slopes of Cader Idris, and which now smile, responsive to his kindly warmth, and now weep (ah! how often do they weep) when his rays are hidden in impenetrable mists, or, anon, laugh and weep at once when "the great winds shoreward blow," and the storm-clouds come rolling in from the sea and gather on the mountain-crests; then one side of a valley may mourn, lost to view below the overhanging gloom, while, on the other side, every rock and tree and scaur stand out distinct, and glad under the great shafts of light that fall upon them. Yet Cader Idris is comparatively unknown; its glories are yet unsung, unless it be by some native poet in his native tongue, whose name and whose song are alike unknown to the unsympathetic Saxon. Even George Borrow, who writes so delightfully of things Welsh in his "Wild Wales," only touches upon the skirts of this district; and even if he had treated of it in full, this generation would be none the wiser, for it knows not Borrow—to its loss.

The memory of a balmy day late in October, spent in wandering through this enchanted region, often comes back to me.

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

One of the loveliest of all lovely valleys which the many-armed giant mountain holds in his embrace is that of the Dysynni River; the high-road from the coast up into the hill country crosses the river by a bridge at the sea-end of the valley, not far from the little town which was our starting-point. On this bridge, even though it is somewhat early in the day's walk for loitering, one is fain to linger long, drinking in the views that meet the eyes uplifted to the encircling hills. Inland, Cader Idris himself closes in the valley, the soft clouds that delicately veil his summit lifting every now and then to give a glimpse of his central peak with its twin supporters. Beneath the bridge runs the transparently pure stream of the river, which widens out here into quiet pools on either hand, where the reeds and rushes grow; and across the bridge passes intermittently the stream of country life. There is a cattle sale, or fair, somewhere in the neighbourhood, and now it is a herd of black mountain cattle that goes by, and now a drove of the tiny Welsh sheep, who yield the sweetest mutton that ever tooth of mortal man was set in. It may be, indeed, that the farmer who owns them, and who drives them, would wish that more pounds of mutton went to each sheep, and would be ready to agree with Peacock's Welsh robber chieftain, that, though

"The mountain sheep are sweeter,
Yet the valley sheep are fatter,
And so we deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter."

But these are mercenary views withal, and not to be entertained by a man of sentiment; none such, I am persuaded, but would exchange the juiciest and fattest Southdown for the leanest of these little mountaineers. However, he who can write worthily of Welsh mutton need have the pen of Elia; and so the companion essay

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

to "Roast Pig" must remain unwritten for evermore, for it is just as likely that another Shakespeare should arise as another Lamb. I have said that the farmer who owns the flock drives them; he does, indeed, walk behind them, but he takes a very unimportant part in the care of them; all that is managed by the dog, whose action his master makes some show of directing by much unnecessary shouting. So, at least, it seems to us, looking idly on; for to our ears the speech of the master—save that it is interspersed with the one English word which has attained universal acceptance, given now with a Welsh intonation, but still recognisable, "Tam"—is unintelligible gibberish; while the language of the dog, both of tail and tongue, is so perfectly clear that we cannot fail to be impressed with the sense that he knows most about the business, and that the instruction, and especially the damnatory clause, is quite uncalled for. Besides dog and man, one other higher animal accompanies nearly every drove of sheep—a solemn, stately goat; resenting, it may be, his dread separation from the sheep in Christian symbolism, he scorns to associate with them now; proud as Lucifer he stalks behind in sullen solitude. But we are only at the beginning of our walk, and may not tarry longer.

The road soon begins to ascend the northern slope of the valley, and then, at some height above the river turns, and following the valley's course, runs directly towards Cader Idris. The valley to-day speaks only of loveliness and peace; but the memory still hangs about it "of old, unhappy, far-off things, of battles long ago." You may just descry a rock rising up in the centre of the valley at its furthest end; Cader Idris towers at its back, and the lesser hills close it tightly in on either side, for here the valley has narrowed almost to a point. On that rock once stood one of the strongest castles in Wales,

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

though you have to look carefully now before you shall discover any remnant of it. It was the castle of the ill-fated David, Llewellyn's less noble brother; and it was here that, just for one moment after Llewellyn's fall, the last faint semblance of independent Welsh royalty flickered, and then, like the bard who chanted its death-song, "plunged to endless night." After Llewellyn's death, David, alone of all the Welsh princes, refused to give in his submission; yet the fear of the "ruthless king" was upon him, and though his castle was deemed impregnable, for the whole valley was then a morass, he dared not await there Edward's attack, but betook him to the mountains, and for six months lived the life of a hunted animal, and then met a crueller fate than was ever dealt out by a hunter to a captured beast of prey: by order of Parliament he was condemned to be drawn to the gallows as a traitor; to have his bowels burnt before his face; to be hanged as a murderer, and to have his quarters dispersed throughout the country. The sentence was literally carried out, and there was a fierce dispute between York and Winchester for the possession of the right shoulder of the prince.

Across the river, just opposite to where we stand, a vast crag juts out from the line of hills, bearing a fantastic resemblance to a huge, ill-omened bird brooding over the valley. A stern and gloomy rock it is, and though, now that the soft autumnal sunshine falls on it, and the shadows flit across it, its gloom for the moment is chased away, yet it falls in readily with our melancholy musings, and we let our fancy picture the last of the Bards, in those old times of terror, taking his stand here instead of on the "rock which frowns o'er Conway's flood," and from this height, looking down on the ruined home of the last Prince of Wales of the old line, and, with his fate in mind, hurling his denunciation of a corre-

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

sponding fate, but even more terrible, upon the first Prince of Wales of the new line, Edward of Carnarvon:

“When Severn should re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roof that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king!”

when the “she-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs, tore out the bowels of her mangled mate.”

Six centuries have passed since these last scenes in the Welsh struggle for independence; and yet the sturdy Welshman clings to his nationality and his speech, and the brave old boast of the Welsh chieftain to the English king looks as if it should yet find its justification: “My people may be weakened by your might, and in great part destroyed; but unless the wrath of God be on the side of its foe, it will not perish utterly. Nor deem I that other race or other tongue will answer for this corner of the world before the Judge of all at the last day, save the people and the tongue of Wales.”

Yet again, six centuries before these words were spoken, other words of like import fell from the lips of the old British bard, Taliesin, in the first days of the English invasion, when the sense of its coming doom lay heavy upon Britain, as it did upon all parts of the Roman world; words which have been thus Englished:

“A serpent which coils,
And with fury boils,
From Germany coming with armed wings spread,
Shall subdue and shall enthrall
The broad Britain all
From the Lochlin ocean to Severn's bed.

And British men
Shall be captives then
To strangers from Saxonia's strand,
They shall praise their God, and hold
Their language as of old
But except wild Wales they shall lose their land.”

But now a sound fell upon our ears, recalling us from

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

the sorrowful Past to the happier Present; it was a sound of song and music, which issued from a little mountain village church not many yards removed from where we stood. Nothing loth, we turned aside to listen more nearly, and to learn what might be the occasion of the service on this week-day morning; so through the lych-gate we passed, and then, as its door stood invitingly open, into the church itself, to find a Harvest-Thanksgiving service (for in these uplands the harvest is late) drawing to a close with the lusty singing of the recessional hymn. What though the proportion of choir to congregation reminded us somewhat of the Highland regiment which consisted of "four-and-twenty fighting men and five-and-twenty pipers"; the disproportion would be amended in the evening at the Welsh service (so the old clerk assured us), when the little church would be "crowded whatever." And, moreover, we learnt—for we lingered on after clergy, choir, congregation had all dispersed—that if that morning's congregation had lacked at all in quantity, it had more than made up in quality for that lack, for had not the Squire himself been there, and his lady? We let ourselves down wofully in the old man's esteem when we professed our ignorance of the squire's name; for these Welsh squires of old family are still held by their tenants and neighbours in very much the same esteem in which Glendower held himself—they are "not in the roll of common men"—and never to have heard of any one of them in his own particular neighbourhood is as though one had never heard of Queen Victoria. Was it not some old woman dwelling among these hills who, in the days when our gracious sovereign lady began her reign, hearing of the young maiden queen, thought what a nice thing it would be for the young lady if Squire Griffith-ap-Lloyd (also unmarried) were to take a fancy for her?

But matter of greater interest to us than even the

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

glories of the squire detains us long within the walls of the little church, for it contains a truly splendid treasure in its exquisitely-carved wood screen, worthy of minutest examination. Here it stands before the altar of his God, the loving offering of some long-dead and long-forgotten one, who, like Bezaleel of old, was "filled with the spirit of God in the carving of timber, and to work all manner of workmanship for glory and for beauty." The spirit of beauty which breathes through these mountain valleys had penetrated the soul of him who wrought here. Alas! that spirit breathes in vain over the men who work and worship amongst the valleys and hills of Wales to-day; for the site of their newest work is generally marked by some ghastly erection of corrugated iron; and their newest place of worship is generally some hardly less ghastly erection of plastered brick or stone. But the old clerk must get to his dinner, and before he goes he must see the church, with its treasures of decorative fruit, safely locked against prying eyes and prying fingers; and we, too, begin to feel the appetizing effect of the mountain air, and so we leave the village church to go in search of the village inn. I think it is Ruskin who somewhere says that every village should have its fair *Tabernacle*, and, hard by, its comfortable *Taberna*. Our village amply fulfilled these requirements, and we soon found a tavern which promised a kind and cleanly welcome, if a homely one. The little parlour into which we are shown has for its chief glory, as all such little parlours have, an enormous pier glass surmounting the chimney-piece, festooned with an arrangement in red and green tissue paper, curiously cut. The glass can exist for ornament only, and not for use, for it yields only the most distorted and grotesque reflection of outside things. On either side of the glass hang pictures of Mr Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield. The

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

choice of these two as guardians of his hearth marks the political impartiality of mine host, an impartiality which, I grieve to say, seems not to extend to things religious; for amongst the men of light and leading in the religious world whose portraits adorn the other walls of the room, none are to be found save of divines belonging to that body of Christians denominated Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. One other work of art, however, there is, in which Englishmen may claim an equal interest with Welshmen, and Churchman with Dissenter—a representation, marvellously wrought in wool of many colours, of our first parents. Judging from the severity of outline, the artist depicts them as they were whilst still in the innocence of Paradise; yet have they been banished to a dark recess in the room, as though the sense of their coming shame was strong upon them. Specimens of literature as well as art abound here, for the most part, however, in the Welsh tongue, and, therefore, sealed writings to us. Yet amongst them I found (in an old Welsh and English dictionary)—what I had long asked for in vain from all Welshmen of my acquaintance—a clear and definite rule for the pronunciation of the Welsh “ll.” Some Englishmen are vain enough to think that the English “th” is a complete and satisfactory equivalent; but Welshmen smile contemptuously at such a poor makeshift. Borrow, indeed, says there is no difficulty at all; but then Borrow was a genius. But the difficulty, whatever it be, must surely disappear with the extended knowledge of the simple rule here given—thus it runs: “It (the double ‘l’) may be pronounced by fixing the tongue to the roof of the mouth about one-eighth of an inch farther back than where ‘l’ is articulated, and breathing forcibly through the jaw-teeth on the right side.” One has only to take a word in which the “ll” occurs twice over, Llangollen, for instance, and apply the rule, to be convinced of its

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

sweet simplicity. Thus, after much mental and bodily refreshment—the latter consisting of good Welsh ale, and “Bara-y-Caws,” which Borrow says is Welsh for bread and cheese—I know not—we betook us to the road again, but followed it only a little further up the valley, and then determined to strike across the ridge on our left, and make for a certain small railway station, with a very big name, on the coast, not far from the corner of the Mawddach estuary, which bounds the domain of Cader Idris to the north. Up we passed, along bye-paths and across boggy fields and through melancholy farm-yards, until at last we reached the highest ground of ridge, and then turned to take farewell of the valley we were leaving. How wondrous fair it lay, spread at our feet, clothed in its autumnal robe of many tints! Here were pasture lands of vivid green; bare hill-sides with the russet hue upon them of the withered bracken; and a few golden fields in which the corn was still ungathered; groups of trees with their fast-yellowing leaves, with here and there a spot of brilliant red, which showed where the wild cherry flaunted his bravery; and here and there, in sombre contrast, a clump of darkling firs; Dysynni’s stream, like a silver thread, intersects the picture, and the mellow light of the October afternoon was shed upon it all. At last we tore ourselves away and fared forward; then once again we turned, to find the valley itself lost to view, and only the topmost parts of Cader showing now above the ridge. So we steadily set our faces towards the north-west, and presently began to find some compensation for the view we had lost in that which now opened out before us. Very different indeed in character was this view from the other, but with a sad beauty of its own, almost as entrancing as the laughing joy of the valley; for now the far-reaching plain of the sea lay stretched out at our feet—“the un-

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

plumb'd, salt, estranging sea"—in all its majesty, and with its inevitable suggestion of undying sorrow and moaning agony. It was, I suppose, this inexplicable connection between the sight of the sea and the sense of sorrow that caused the Seer of Patmos, in his description of his vision of the new heaven and the new earth, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain," to add the strangely-sounding sentence, "there shall be no more sea." Yet, surely, the final message of the sea to man is not one of sorrow. It is, perhaps, only because in our manhood we have lost touch, and feel out of harmony with the mysteries that lie at either end of our life, and the immensities which surround us, that the sea (which suggests these mysteries as nothing else in nature does, though every wide extending view does this in some measure) speaks to us of pain. Children, upon whom "the shades of their prison house" have hardly begun to close, have no such feeling; for them the sea is the best of good comrades, the jolliest yet gentlest of play-fellows; and it may be that in some "season of calm weather," as we watch the children play, that the sense of discord dies away for the time, and an apocalyptic vision of the Eternal harmonies is vouchsafed to us, too, in which the sea has its part:

" Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Do in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

But the sun is fast westering now. Great beams of ruddy light, like flaming swords, shoot up into the sky, and all the sea below is crimsoned; and far away across it we see the purple hills of what looks like another land. But it is only that sheltering arm which Wales

ON THE SLOPES OF CADER IDRIS

bends round the head of Cardigan Bay, and the hills are the shapely Rivals and the lone Carn Fadryn, and low-lying lands between and low-lying lands beyond, ending at last in Burdsey Island, the westernmost point of North Wales. Once again we linger, watching the pageant of the dying day, till, in the gathering shadows we see, away to the north, the lights of Barnmouth begin to twinkle, and then one light separates itself gradually from the others, and we know that it is the train starting on its passage across the long, low railway bridge, which spans the estuary of the Mawddach; in less than half-an-hour it will have reached the little station with the long, unpronounceable name which lies below us, and a good mile away. We must hurry on to catch it, and in it, to be whirled back in unromantic fashion to our morning's starting-point.

A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE

It chanced to us not many weeks ago to be looking out on a scene of surpassing loveliness from the burying-place of a noble family, perched high on a lonely hill-side in the south of Ireland. The deep gloom of the spot on which we stood—a gloom such as Doré would have delighted to picture—contrasted strangely with the brilliant sunshine which flooded all the valley we overlooked. A mortuary chapel, lichen-crusted, stands amid a crowd of grave-stones and nameless mounds; tall beaches overshadow them and look, with their smooth, straight, silvery stems, like ghostly sentinels; and all amongst them the tufted grasses grow and tangled weeds: a place of “thistles and nettles and darnels rank,” of neglect and decay. Yet the inside of the chapel has careful tending; in its centre are the marble effigies of two chieftains of this Great House; here

“They rest, for ever rest, a princely pair,
In their high church, 'mid the still mountain air.”

And through a grating in the chancel-wall the light streams down upon another monument of perfect grace: here a mother and her baby are shown by the sculptor's art sunk in soft sleep; the mother, who “drank deep draughts of death” in bearing the child, who only lived to die. How peaceful and secure their rest now! The child wrapped in its mother's arms, “its little hand for ever prest against the circle of the breast,” with power, as we feel, to draw from that breast all pain away. Other monuments, and epitaphs which tell of

A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE

heroic deeds, or of innocent lives, of each domestic charity fulfilled, and sufferings meekly borne, look down from the walls. But more fascinating than even the gloom without or the grace within is the view from the church's western door—a picture such as earthly artist never drew, set as in a frame by the over-arching trees. A far-reaching plain lies at our feet carpeted with the richest greenery, all bespangled with "burning bushes" of golden gorse, the sight of which might well fill us with the sense of the divine presence. Beyond the plain, springing out of it abruptly, the everlasting hills lift up their heads: the whole scene bathed in sunlight is one of laughing gladness and full of the joy of life. Such, at least, is the first impression it gives; and yet here, as everywhere in that strange land, there is an understrain of deepest melancholy. There may be sunshine now; but the suggestion of weeping rain is never far away. It comes in the very softness of the air, in the very clearness of the distant horizon.

And as we look the sense of laughing gladness dies out of our hearts, for the stillness of death lies upon the valley; the homesteads—such homesteads as they are, the two-roomed cabins with their unspeakable dirt—are few and far between; and neither bleating of sheep nor lowing of oxen is to be heard; and the picture's rich colouring—the lovely emerald green—tells, as we know, of marshy lands undrained and rank growths begotten of moisture. But withal it is beautiful, even though it speaks of decay and death: it is death's fairer side, at least, which is shown—fitting counterpart to the beautiful records of his handiwork within the church. But reminders of his gloomier aspect, such as surround us in the grim churchyard, are not lacking either from the scene before us. So clear is the

A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE

rain-washed sky that far away on the opposite mountain-side we can plainly see where, in the deep shadow of a mighty overhanging cliff, lies

“A lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o’er.”

For though it is not St Kevin’s lake, the curse which he laid upon Glendalough ought henceforth to lie upon this too, which was the scene the other day of one of those lawless tragedies for which Ireland is infamous. Some poor wretch living in this fair valley a harmless life, according to our English notions, but who had committed a capital offence against the Celtic code of morals, was seized, hurried from his home to this desolate spot, bound hand and foot, and hurled from the cliff into the dark water. As we leaned on the churchyard wall talking over this “painful incident,” as the newspapers might term it, we called to mind Scott’s wonderful description in “Rob Roy,” how the like fate overtook the unhappy exciseman at the hands of the MacGregor’s wife. How seldom, by-the-way, it is that the true master of romance indulges in a scene of mere horror, and, even when he does, what dignity of restraint marks his language. Almost word for word the tale of the Highlander’s lawless act is the tale of this last Irish deed of darkness—at least, in its closing scene: “The victim was held fast by some of his murderers or executioners—call them as you will—while others, binding a large heavy stone in a plaid, tied it round his neck. Half-naked, and thus manacled, they hurled him into the lake, drowning his last death-shriek with a loud halloo of vindictive triumph, above which, however, the yell of mortal agony was distinctly heard. The heavy burden splashed in the dark blue waters . . . the knot had been securely bound; the victim sunk without effort; the waters which his fall had disturbed settled

A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE

calmly over him; and the unit of that life for which he had pleaded so strongly was for ever withdrawn from the sum of human existence."

May not the record of what was happening in this valley just one hundred years ago, to go no further back upon the unhappiness of Irish history, afford some explanation of the state of things now? The Royal Yeomanry were disporting themselves in these fair pastures then in pursuit of "croppies," as the Irish insurgents were called, from their 'closely-cropped hair; these gentlemen were the inventors of the pitch-cap torture. In their guard-houses were stored a number of caps of coarse linen or strong brown paper, besmeared inside with pitch. The unhappy "croppy" who fell into the hands of these fiends was crowned with a pitch-cap well heated, and then, when it was judged to have cooled sufficiently to afford the proper amount of sport, he was turned loose amidst the jeers of his tormentors. The pain of disengaging the cap from the head was almost intolerable, the hair often being torn out by the roots, and not unfrequently parts of the scalp along with it. These were some of the pleasantries of the soldiery; their more serious business included severer forms of torture and every form of rapine and murder. "And strange to tell," says a local Protestant historian, "these atrocities were publicly practised without the least reserve in open day, and no magistrate or officer ever interfered, but shamefully connived at this strange mode of quieting the people."

But we are getting drawn into the vortex of the Irish question—from which fate we had determined most resolutely to guard ourselves. Far be it from us to flatter ourselves that we possess the answer to that most insoluble of problems. We can only note the paradoxes which meet us at every turn in Irish scenery

A MEDITATION IN AN IRISH SOLITUDE

and in Irish life: the glorious beauty of the land amidst all its desolation, waste, and decay; the wit and gaiety and religious devotion of the peasantry amidst all their squalor, poverty, and drunkenness; their charming courtesy and their wild bursts of vengeful passion; their eloquence and their untruthfulness; their dishonesty and their generosity. And we have only to add that while despair of a happy issue out of present troubles seems to be forbidden by the presence of so much that is loveable in Ireland and in Irishmen, so is over-much confidence in the success of any remedial measure forbidden by the uncertain elements in the Irish character. The smile and the tear are never far away from each other in Ireland, as Moore sang long ago:—

“Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eyes
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy skies;
Shining through sorrow’s stream,
Saddening through pleasure’s beam,
Thy suns with doubtful gleam
Weep while they rise.”

AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE

By A CONFIRMED IDLER

GRIM and gaunt and grey towers the hotel which crowns the hill and overlooks the little town on the hill's slope and the lagoon which lies at the foot of the town. "The Great Hotel," for so it calls itself, like many another thing in Ireland has seen better, or at least more festive, days. Once it was the chosen rendezvous of squireens from all the county; in the great dining-room they drank their punch gaily, and in the great ball-room overhead, they danced out many a night, and danced in many a dawn. Their place seems to be taken now by the clergy, and the walls and rooms of the hotel are adorned or darkened by the orthodox black coats and tall hats of the Irish priesthood.

A splendid stretch of sandy beach separates the lagoon, on which the hotel looks down, from the bay beyond. A noble bay it is, and when the clear waters of the Atlantic lie in its embrace, placid and still, and sparkling in the sunshine, it would seem to offer the fairest welcome to all seafarers. But the witchery of its smile is as treacherous as the siren's song. For the sand extends but a little way, and the bottom of the bay is broken up with cruel rock, which rises on its either arm into majestic and savage cliffs. When a southern gale is blowing the great Atlantic rollers come tumbling and foaming into the bay, and dashing in wild fury against its encircling arms send their spray far inland over fields and homesteads. Woe betide any sailing vessel then which is driven within the jaws of the

AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE

bay; its fate is sealed; it cannot ride at anchor; it cannot beat its way out. So fared it some eighty years ago with the ill-fated troopship the *Seahorse*, carrying the 59th Regiment to quarters in Ireland. She was caught in a winter storm, driven into this bay, and shivered on its rocks. Even to this day relics of this disaster are sometimes discovered in digging on the beach: an old musket, perhaps, deeply encrusted with sand and sea-growths, such as I have seen adorning a fisherman's cottage wall, silent now and harmless, but which has in its day dealt out death and destruction, and helped to swell the hideous roar on many a Spanish Akeldama; and which once, too, on a certain celebrated occasion, was silent as it is to-day, when

"Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where their hero they buried."

For the 59th was at Corunna.

Every now and then among these grim rocks, which below are broken up into fantastic archways, or hollowed into gloomy caves, you may come across a little bay fringed with gleaming sand or shingle, and filled with sunshine. A glen, musical with the babble of a brook which is presently lost in the sand or hushed in the sea, breaks inland from the bay. The scene is illumined with the most gorgeous colouring, for the cliffs are overgrown with lichen, and the banks of the glen (if it be the time of the heather and the gorse) are clothed with the most bewilderingly lovely mixture of purple and gold. Here is the most perfect of bathing places, for here, as Clough has it, "you are shut in, left alone with yourself and perfection of water." How delicious it is on a balmy summer morning to plunge from a rocky platform into the cool, clear depths where wave the lovely flora of the sea which we land-creatures call its weeds. They say that it was not altogether uncommon

AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE

some years ago for the bather in these shy retreats to find the seals at play. They have long been scared away; for if the bather called himself a sportsman, it was, of course, his one idea to come back as quickly as possible with a gun and steal a pot shot at these, his harmless companions of the bath.

The country at the back of the little town, with all its lovely line of coast, is described in the guide books as "dull and uninteresting." Truth to tell it is bare and flat enough, and yet it has to the full that inexpressible charm, that inexplicable fascination which more or less appertains to all Irish scenery. Go but a little way from the town and you may enter upon a stillness as profound as that of the desert—a stillness unbroken by song of bird, or sound of beast, or voice of man; you may look round you over a wide-extending plain, your view unbroken by hedge-row or by tree. There are great stretches of bog, and only here and there a solitary thatched cabin surrounded by its little patch of cultivation; but such colouring everywhere; the low stone dykes are clothed with flowering grasses, and the fields are filled with poppy and samphire, with ox-eyed daisies lifting their bold faces to heaven, and purple fritillaries bending their bashful heads to earth. As a background to the whole scene a noble range of mountains rises far off abruptly from the plain. There are savage precipices, and lonely lakes, and strange caverns among these mountains, each with its romantic name and romantic legend, but all blended now by distance into one undistinguishable mass of blue.

In this strange land one looks to meet with contradictions at every turn, and to have one's preconceived or acquired ideas reversed again and again; and truly one is not disappointed. Yet one impression seems to abide—that of the poverty of the country. But as one

AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE

turns from this inland view towards the little seaside town again, even this impression is like to be modified. For above the ridge of hill which hides the town, above the roof of the "Great Hotel" even, the spire of the Roman Church stands out against the sky. The church itself is as splendid as the spire is lofty. The same phenomenon meets you constantly in Ireland—a new and costly church rising out of the most squalid poverty-stricken surroundings. Enormous sums of money must have been devoted to church-building in the course of the last few years by a peasantry which, apparently, possesses nothing.

Into this church I turned one Sunday evening at the time of Benediction. The high altar was ablaze with light, but all the body of the church was in gloom. Some preliminary litany was in progress, and every now and then a low rumble of response ran through all the prostrate crowd. Then came the service itself, the swinging of the censers, the ringing of the bell, the exhibition of the Host, and bursts of sacred melody from some mysterious gallery high up in air. But even the impression of reverent awe left by this service was doomed to reversal; for I went yet again, and now all the church was lighted up with gas, displaying tawdry decorations, and feeble pictures upon the walls, interspersed with printed notices requesting the worshippers "not to spit upon the floor, for it is consecrated." The choristers were no longer concealed in a distant organ gallery, but stood round about a young woman who played upon a harmonium in the nave. This time, too, there was a sermon, the eloquent peroration of which would have been somewhat marred, in the ears of any other congregation, by a mixture of metaphors truly Irish. The Catholic Church, said the preacher, was like some mighty river, whose surface might be disturbed by

AN IRISH WATERING-PLACE

storm and tempest, but it could receive no vital hurt, and its course could not be really impeded, for it was founded upon the Rock. But here I feel that I trench on dangerous ground; the Englishman has no right to criticise Irish ways or Irish utterances, for he cannot understand them. I have ever before me Cardinal Cullen's warning to the ingenuous tourist who inquired of him what he must do to understand Ireland and the Irish: "You must be born again," said his Eminence, "and take care that your mother is an Irishman."

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

"HE who has once tasted of the water of the Nile can never rest till he drink it again," says an Arab proverb. What amount of literal truth the proverb may possess I will not undertake to say; but certain it is that he whose soul has once been touched by the fascination of Egypt turns again and again in spirit, if he may not return in body, with great longing to that land of stillness and mystery, of desert solitudes and forsaken temples. This fascination, cannot, of course, be felt in Cairo; Cairo has quite another charm all its own. Nor can it nowadays be felt, even under the shadows of the pyramids, where tourists abound and lawn-tennis flourishes. Indeed, I doubt whether it can now be felt anywhere north of the first cataract—the beat of the steamer has driven it south as surely as it has driven the crocodile. But years ago, when, on board your "daha-beeah," you might sail up long reaches of the Nile and hear no other sound than the chant of your sailors or the distant song of the Fellahin at their work in the fields, the fascination of Egypt might be felt in all its fulness. Anyhow, never does Christmastide come round, with its inevitable attendants, fogs and bills, but I go back in thought to a Christmas of long ago spent in the careless ease and splendid sun and dreamy silence of Egypt.

One day is very much like another on the up Nile voyage, for sight-seeing is left to be done on the down journey; southward, ever southward, you go, sailing merrily and easily if the north wind blows fair, being towed along painfully and slowly if wind there is none.

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

But we were fully determined that Christmas Day should not be spent like all the other sixty of the voyage to the second cataract. On the morning of Christmas Eve we became aware, in studying Murray and the map, that we were not so very far distant from Belianeh but that a push might be made to reach it ere nightfall; and that, Belianeh once reached and a halt called there, we might spend our Christmas Day in an inland expedition to the far-famed Abydos. Our dragoman was summoned to consultation, and gave the oracular response, after a form to which by this time we were well accustomed, that we might get to Belianeh that day,—or we might not: “Inshallah,” Belianeh should be reached. We all knew the uncertainties veiled by that pious ejaculation, and our spokesman now announced to the dragoman that this was not an occasion for weak-kneed concession to the Fates. “We must get to Belianeh to-day, Inshallah or not Inshallah,” said this impious Englishman. It reminded one of the rash deacon’s announcement in the chapel that service would be held on Wednesday evening, *D.V.*, but in any case on Sunday. This recklessness so vastly tickled our dragoman that we heard him chuckling to himself over it for the rest of the morning. Moreover, he repeated it to the reis, who, however, looked shocked, being a religious man. But at noon the smile had died away from the face of the dragoman, and he began to repent of his levity; for the north wind, which had been blowing all the morning with an ever-increasing force, had by this time grown to a gale, before which we had to run into Girgeh for shelter and to furl the “dahabeeah’s” huge, unwieldy sail.

A difficult and even dangerous process is that of furling the great sail of a “dahabeeah.” The whole crew are engaged on it, the foremost of them clambering up

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

to the extreme tip of the yard, some ninety feet in the air, and the rest disposed at intervals along its length; then, with arms and legs hanging over, and working with all four limbs, they strive to gather the folds of the sail into their grasp, and bind them firmly to the yard; but again and again, before the work is accomplished, will the sail be blown out to its full extent, threatening to involve in ruin the whole line of monkey-like figures in its mad efforts to free itself. However, on this occasion, the sail was furled at last without catastrophe. Then again we put out, and with bare poles drifted southward before the storm. In this fashion we made but little headway against the stream; and as the afternoon wore on our chance of reaching Belianeh seemed to be growing small. The dragoman looked reproachfully at us, and the look said plainly that here was the result of those unseemly words about the will of Allah. But before sunset the wind sank, and once more the great sail was spread, barely filling now with the gentle breeze, and we stole along through the gathering shadows over the broad, brown waters of the Nile. Our dragoman was not only a dragoman, he was the owner of our boat, and he loved it as a woman loves her first-born; an anxious man he was when he fancied that the safety of his beloved was in any way jeopardised. If it ever chanced that we had not come to our moorings before dark, he would be filled with imaginary fears of collision or some other mischance. It seemed this evening as if for once his fears were to be justified. Somehow or another our great sail came in contact with that of a passing cargo-boat: then there was a moment of wild shouting, and cursing, and crying, and the excited dragoman, seizing the only weapon which was at hand, and which happened to be a deck chair, began to belabour his helmsman therewith.

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

But soon the sail of the unfortunate cargo-boat rent in twain, and freed ours uninjured. "God is good!" said the pious dragoman; but whether the wretched crew of the other boat, whom we left wailing, took the same view of the intervention of Providence is doubtful. But if their trust in Allah was shaken for the moment, we did our best to restore it by the compensation we were able to send them afterwards. Late that night we moored under the steep bank on which Belianeh is perched, beyond the reach of the summer overflow. An unwonted bustling overhead awoke us early on Christmas morning, and when we went above for a draught of the fresh morning air it was to find our upper deck converted into a bower of greenery with Christmas decorations—not, however, of the familiar holly, but of sugar-cane. The decorations served a double purpose, appealing at once to Christian sentiment and to Moslem appetite; and for the next week the whole crew nibbled away at them as so many church mice might do at Harvest Festival decorations at home. Their Christmas feasting, however, was not confined to sugar-cane, for the leader of the expedition announced that he would present them with a sheep to gorge themselves withal, an announcement which brought on a great demonstration by way of thanks—a solemn muster and march-past of the crew, each man kissing our hands as he went by. One of them, who passed amongst his fellows for a great authority upon the English tongue, was put forward as leader of the file, being the one who could do justice to the occasion in the "Khowaja's" own language. He possessed a choice collection of English phrases, which he produced as his fancy prompted. The one which he selected as fit greeting for this Christmas morning was "Good-night"; his fellows each in turn echoed his greeting as best they

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

might, and passed on well satisfied that everything required by the festival had been most eloquently said.

By this time the donkey boys of Belianeh had got wind of the arrival of a "dahabeeah" in the night, and now the bank was crowded with animals of varying size and shade, with boys to match. We made our selection, and set off on our ride to Abydus. It was a ride much to be remembered. Once clear of Belianeh, the pathway struck across the plain for the western desert hills; here they are seven miles distant from the Nile, and the stretch of ground between the river and the desert is one of the most fertile in all the land of Egypt. We rode along in the bright sunlight through fields of young wheat most vividly green and bean-fields most delicately scented; the air was filled with the song of larks and the chant of the Fellahin. The plain is dotted here and there with brown mud villages, each built on its own mound, sentinelled by its own group of palms. Very picturesque they look, these brown islets in the green sea; sometimes with one house, two-storeyed and white-plastered, conspicuous among its humbler dingy neighbours—the house of the village Sheykh; but the picturesqueness is discounted somewhat as you ride through the village, and are beset by dirty fly-blown children clamouring for backsheesh. The last of these villages, on the edge of the desert, is Abydus itself, squatted on the dust-heaps of long-gone ages. These dreary mounds of rubbish are all that remain of This, or Thinis, the oldest of Egyptian towns, where Osiris himself lies buried, and where Egyptian civilisation had its birth. But there is something more than dust and desolation at Abydus; there are two splendid temples of the later times of Sethi and Rameses II. Of the beauties of these temples it is not for me to speak; are they not written in the books of all the Egyptolo-

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

gists? Who that has read of Egypt at all has not read of the sculptured walls and columns of the noble Temple (if temple it were) of Sethi finished just before Egyptian art entered upon its long period of decline? Here we ate our Christmas mid-day meal, the gods and kings of old Egypt looking down upon us from the walls unmoved; the children of modern Egypt making up for their cold disdain by exhibiting the liveliest curiosity in our proceedings—spying at us from behind the Temple's pillars, or peeping at us through its roof. As we sat there in the shadow of the far-off Past, one amongst us, in a pessimistic spirit which often seizes him, began, with all acknowledgments to Macaulay, to discourse of the far-off Future when tourists from over the sea should eat their lunch amidst the ruins of some English cathedral, questioning of the meaning of the symbols of the forgotten faith which surrounded them, as we now questioned of the meaning of the mystic pictures of Abydos. We stopped his mouth at last with pigeon pie, and with the reflection that Christmas Day was not the time to indulge in these unchristian forebodings. The wonders of Abydos—its temples, its fortress, its quaintest of Coptic churches—cannot be exhausted in one day or many. We did what we could in the few hours we had, and then set off again across the plain for Belianeh, promising ourselves another visit on our return journey. The sun was dipping now towards the western hills and the limitless desert behind them, and casting ever-lengthening shadows over the plain in front. The day's work was done, and we passed groups of peasants with their beasts of burden, making their way home—a camel, perhaps, stalking along in front, a donkey close behind, looking absurdly small, and a heavy, slouching buffalo bringing up the rear. Amongst one of these groups,

CHRISTMAS ON THE NILE

or rather lagging somewhat dolefully behind it, was a girl carrying a broken water-jar. "Won't you get a good scolding when you get home?" was the consoling remark our dragoman addressed to her. "No," said she, "they will only say, 'Thank God that our sister has come back safely, and that it is only the pitcher which has been broken.'"

The marvellous afterglow of sunset had passed from the cloudless sky and darkness settled upon the land ere we reached again the steep bank from which Belianeh looks down upon the Nile; below us lay our boat, yet more transformed with Christmas braveries than it had been when we left it in the morning; for now the triumphal arches of sugar-cane were all hung with many-coloured lanterns and our upper deck was a very fairy-bower. Here, after dinner, we lay resting our limbs, wearied with many hours of donkey-riding—lay, like the lotus-eaters,

"Lull'd by warm airs blowing lowly
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
And watched the wondrous river drawing slowly
His waters . . . to the far off sparkling brine"—

listening the while to the weird melody of the Arab songs and music with which our sailors on their deck below were winding up their Christmas festivities. Is there any more plaintive sound than the long-drawn "Aäh" which closes every stave of an Egyptian song? The last of these "Aähs" was dying away upon the air when Mohammed, the English scholar, made his appearance on our deck to speed with winged words the parting festival, even as he had ushered it in. He was apparently so well satisfied with his morning effort that he could now do no better than repeat it. But his "Good-night" sounded now upon our ears with more appropriateness than when it fell upon them as the morning greeting of our Christmas Day.

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

WHO that has ever seen the Temple of the Great King at Aboo-Simbel can forget the supreme moment when his "dahabeeah" turned the corner of the last reach of the Nile to the north of it, and far away under the shadow of their great rock he caught the first glimpse of those four majestic figures sitting with their vast hands spread out upon their knees, and the calm, contemptuous smile upon their lips? So they have sat and smiled for four thousand years. Dynasties have risen and set; nations have been born and have died; the whole face of the world has changed and changed again; but the great kings smile unmoved. Behind them the desert solitudes stretch without limit, at their feet flows the great river with tide "too full for sound and foam." Silence surrounds them well suited to their calm unchangeableness, for,

" Though wild hyænas call, and low winds moan,
Here the true silence reigns, self-conscious and alone."

Not that they are really wholly unchanged, for the hand of the tourist, as well as the hand of time, has fallen upon them. The mighty head of one Colossus lies at his feet, and all of them are scored all over with names and inscriptions wrought by men of all times, from the days of the old Greek mercenaries of Psammetichus unto this present; yet they are so great that the impression they give is that of unchanged and unchangeable majesty. But I have not undertaken to write of the wonders of the Temple of Aboo-Simbel. Suffice it to say that on a January evening, many years ago, after slowly beating up the

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

last reach, we anchored just below the Great Temple. The sun had set in glory, the afterglow had died away, and the shadows of night were gathering before we dropped anchor; but we waited until moon-rise to make the nearer acquaintance of the Temple and its godlike guardians. Aboo-Simbel was to be our turning-point, and so the whole of the next day had to be spent here while the "dahabeeah" was refitted for its downstream journey. That day was destined to be an eventful one for me. The whole morning we spent in prowling about the Temple; and now in the afternoon I had stolen away by myself up the steep slope of sand which reaches to the top of the cliff in which the Temple is hewn—leaving one friend immersed in affairs photographic, and the other, low be it spoken, busied in carving his name on the rock, yet modestly in a secluded corner, and not with the bolder wit of some tourists upon the nose or cheek of Rameses. Wearied with my climb, I threw myself down under such shade as I could find in that parched wilderness, and the thought of those old Greeks, whose inscription upon the leg of the headless statue I had just been endeavouring to decipher, possessed my soul. It was more than a century before the great days of Marathon and Salamis that they had sailed up the river and visited the Temple. Even in their days it was a monument of antiquity, and there it still stood defying the passage of time. But even if somewhat of change had passed over it, here at least, thought I, in this desolate plateau, stretching as far as sight can reach (and how much further), is something that has remained absolutely unchanged in the changing world. Their eyes, if they had climbed the sand slope, must have looked upon precisely the same scene as greeted mine now. I was perhaps beginning to grow a little drowsy, when my thought was

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

uncomfortably irritated into activity by the sight of telegraph wires cutting my range of vision and disturbing my pleasing illusion that into this region, at least, no change had entered. I must move to some point from which this disturbing element was not to be seen. My fancy was taken by a conical hill, or hillock rather, at some distance: let me get to the other side of that, I thought, and there will be no possibility of being reminded by any sight or sound of the existence of modern civilisation or modern man. So I started; but the hill must have been much further off than at first it seemed; at last, however, I got to the far side of it; but then I noticed what allured me a little further—for about a hundred yards beyond was a strange chasm in the ground. So level, so clean cut were the edges of this cleft, that at any considerable distance one would look straight over it without being aware of its existence. But from where I now stood it was plainly discernible. I must go this one step further and look over the edge of the chasm. I went, and was then held spell-bound at what I saw.

I looked into a deep ravine, through which a fair stream ran with pleasant rippling sound—some subterranean offshoot from the Nile; the banks of the stream were clothed with the richest verdure, and at the end of the ravine furthest removed from me was a little grove of palm-trees. But what held me so breathless was not the beauty of the scene, but that under the shadow of the palm-trees I caught sight of the façade of a temple. The temple must, I supposed, be hollowed out of the rock at the back, as the Aboo-Simbel temples are hollowed out of the great rock by the river; but here the temple was of tiny proportions, and its façade of no Egyptian mould, but Greek in every line. How came it to be hidden away here so

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

far from any haunt of man? I made my way down the steep side of the cliff that I might investigate this wonder more nearly. But a new wonder burst upon me when I reached the bed of the stream, the sight of which, I confess, would probably have kept me in the desert above had I seen it from my stand-point there. Close by the temple, and not very many yards from the spot I had now reached, stood a majestic-looking man; his features were of the purest Greek type, but he had a snow-white beard of exceeding length—it reached almost to the ground. It was his beard which gave him the appearance of extreme old age, for he stood erect as a drill-sergeant, and his face, as I afterwards noted, was without a wrinkle.

He stood, when I first caught sight of him, beside a pile of roughly-cut wooden logs, with arms outstretched and eyes uplifted to heaven. As I halted, awed by this vision, not knowing whether to advance or retreat, and, indeed, unable from fear to do either one or the other, he turned and saw me. There was no surprise in his glance; quietly he beckoned me to come to him, and in a voice of great gentleness and rich melody he spoke,—

“Come hither, stranger, and fear not to do the deeds which the gods have appointed for thee, for of a surety they have sent thee in answer to my prayer.”

One of the strangest things to me in this strange interview is that I cannot, as I look back to it, in the least recall what the language was in which the old man spoke. It must have been Greek, I suppose; but my only feeling about it is that there was an archaic flavour in every word, but that otherwise his speech was not unfamiliar to me, nor had I any difficulty in understanding it. The old man moved slowly towards the temple as he ceased to speak, well assured, ap-

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

parently, that I would follow, for he never so much as turned his head to see whether I did so or not; but, indeed, it never occurred to me that I had any choice in the matter. I entered the temple immediately after him. I was prepared now for any sight, however strange, and it was a strange one surely that greeted me. On the floor of the temple, stark and stiff, lay two corpses of men, old and venerable as my guide. On a tiny altar against the further wall stood three Greek lamps; the flame in one glimmered feebly, the other two were cold and dark. Then the old man spoke again pointing to the two bodies as he spoke—

“But one task remains to me in life, and my strength sufficeth not for its accomplishment. I thank the gods, O stranger, that have sent thee at my utmost need. Help me to bear these forth.”

With wondering reverence I obeyed him, and together we carried out the dead and laid them on the pile of wood—a funeral pyre—as I now perceived it to be.

“And now,” said he, “sit down by my side under this palm-tree and thou shalt hear somewhat of my story. Know, then, that I am Phaon of Mytilene, once beloved of Sappho: madman that I was, I knew not that I loved her until she had died for love of me. Never again hath the love of woman entered into my soul; but from that day Divine Philosophy became my mistress, and soothed my pain. These, my two friends, of whom the name of one was Chresphontes, and the name of the other Criton, were fellow-servants with me of this my mistress; and together we talked as we sat on the Lesbian rocks and looked across the dark waters of the unploughed sea, of the nature of gods and men, and of the secrets of life and death. It chanced on a certain day—how long ago that is I know not, for we have kept no count here of what men call

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

time—that one told us of a certain ship which was even then setting sail for Egypt with many soldiers on board, who proposed to take service under Psammetichus, the king of that country. Then said Criton, ‘Let us also go with them, for I have ever heard that the priests in Egypt have deeper knowledge of the things divine than any others of the sons of men.’ To this word we agreed, and to Egypt we came. It happened not long after our arrival that an army was despatched into Ethiopia in pursuit of some deserters, and with this army went certain of the Greeks, we being of the number. Our comrades thought only of adventure and plunder; but we three thought only of how we might perchance gain speech of a certain priest named Amenhotep, whose dwelling was near to the hundred-gated Thebes, and whose repute spread throughout all the land of Egypt for highest wisdom. Stranger, you too have sailed up the mighty river, and know the glories of Thebes; suffice it then for me to say that we found the dwelling of Amenhotep, who, when he knew that we were not all unworthy, communicated to us mysteries which it were for me unlawful to utter. He it was who gave to us the sacred oil, consecrated with many mystic words, whose flame flickers feebly in my lamp as you saw even now, and hath lately died out altogether in the lamps of my comrades. As long as this sacred oil burnt, so long should the spirit of life abide in our bodies, yea, and that without need of any earthly nourishment. He it was, too, who bade us, when, in our course up the river, we should arrive at the temple hewn in the rock, even the temple of the great king, to leave there our comrades and strike across the desert towards the setting of the sun, until we should come unto a certain valley known to him alone of all the sons of men. Here he bade us fashion for ourselves a temple

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

as best we might, and worship the gods after the manner of our own land; and here, seeing that he deemed us, of all men that he had known, most worthy, he bade us light our sacred lamps and dwell at ease, unmindful of all grosser cares, with all our thoughts bent on things divine. Hither, in obedience to his word, we came, and here we have ever since made our abode; but I know not whether the time be long or short as men count it, for time with us (or what is called time, for in reality there is no such thing) has not been measured by the journey of the sun, but by the course of our thought. I know not, stranger, how thou hast come hither, save that I deem the gods have sent thee; it may be that thou too hast seen Amenhotep, and that to thee, as to us, he gave the secret clue to find this spot, and the sacred oil of life, deeming thee also worthy to know things hidden from men. And yet"—and here the old Greek looked me over somewhat superciliously—"your garb and countenance seem not to me the garb and countenance of a philosopher." He paused again, and for one moment I feared he was about to question me of my philosophic attainments. Fear overcame me greater than I had ever known in the examination schools at Oxford. To my intense relief, however, he went on: "Twice only in the course of time hath foot of mortal man, other than ours, been set within this valley till thou camest. Both these seemed worthier than thou; yet, neither stayed with us."

It was impossible to feel any annoyance—even if I had had room for any other feeling than awe—at this old Greek's somewhat personal remarks. He seemed to speak from a height so entirely above me. "First there came one weary and worn and aged,—but of noble mien, and proud, contemptuous glance. There by the

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

side of the stream he laid him down, and hardly could we move him to speech; he bade us leave him alone to die. Yet some few words he spoke—words that sounded strangely in our ears,—for he spoke of a town that we knew not of, greater than all the cities of the Greeks. “Strength” he called it, yet he ever spoke bitter words against the people, and the tyrant thereof. And if the words he spake were true, it would seem that many hundred years had passed since we had journeyed to Egypt. But I know not. He spoke not many words, but few; and here, ere long he died, and his body we burned. The second that came hither was diminutive indeed in stature, smaller even than thou art—”

(Here was another personality that did seem to me uncalled for. I have been ever wont to consider myself of medium height, but no doubt I looked, as I certainly felt, beside the stately Greek, small enough.)

“But on his face sat power and wisdom, planted there by the gods: indeed, as we understood his speech, he called himself one of the Immortals. But when we bade him stay amongst us and enter our temple, he uttered words strange sounding to our ears, and made strange signs with his hands, and fled swiftly up the slope into the desert and we saw him no more.”

Now each who reads this must determine for himself of whom the old man spoke; I can only repeat his words. Yet it seems to me, though I cannot give any reason for its seeming so, that the two he spoke of were two such famous, but so widely diverse men, as Juvenal and Athanasius. But perchance my thought fell on them without due warrant, simply because I had happened to have these two much in mind of late. In the wearisome delays in the Cataract, I had thought of the exiled Juvenal consuming his soul in those

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

dreary solitudes with which Assouan is girt about—if indeed the story of his banishment there be true. But I had little dreamed of coming upon this confirmation of that story, or that he had ever wandered so much further south, or that I should stumble in so marvellous wise upon the scene of his death. Of the wanderings of Athanasius during the Arian persecution, I had been reading still more lately; I can only conjecture, if according to my supposition the old Greek spoke of him, that he had been in hiding with some Egyptian hermit, who perhaps had made his abode in the very Temple of Rameses, when some such chance, as had brought me, brought him to this mystic valley. He must, as I imagine, have deemed the valley and its occupants an illusion, conjured up by some Arius-favouring fiend, and by calling out his own most orthodox name, and by signing the cross, he had hoped to dismay the Devil. One can easily see how the sound of his name suggested to the Greek that he claimed to be immortal. But of the probability that these things were as I conjecture, let each man judge for himself.

After a pause Phaon went on, yet more slowly, and as though he laboured for breath. "Stranger, I might tell thee many things more wonderful than it hath ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; of the passage of this earth through space, of the marvel of the sun and the stars, of the nature of the unseen powers around us. But what boots it! As the ages pass the children of men will gain for themselves this knowledge if they be worthy. Moreover, my breath faileth me now, and I can enter on no long discourse; yet this one thing I will tell thee, the knowledge whereof may serve thee at thy need as thou hast served me at mine. Truest and deepest insight into the essential nature of things, and into the

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

whole meaning of life, and the mysteries that are beyond it, is to be gained not so much by wisdom and learning as through love: do not thou, then, I caution thee, ever slight, as I have done, the love of any among the sons and daughters of men; for love, as I now perceive, is more holy than all philosophy, more precious than all wisdom, outlasteth all learning. Seest thou this?"

He drew from his breast, as he spoke, a withered manuscript.

"This is the last song that Sappho sang, a song of love for me. Behold I would give all the knowledge I have gained ten times told, had I, while it were yet possible, requited her love; had I lived with her and nourished and brought up children in Lesbos far away."

As he spoke the fire of youth seemed for one moment to shine in his eyes, and his whole face was transfused with a glorious beauty. Again he paused, and then again, with still more laboured breathing, he went on:

"Stranger, tarry here, or go, as it pleaseth thee. I go into the temple to watch my dying lamp: ere it is wholly and for ever extinguished, I will kindle at its flame this papyrus, which shall be my torch to light the funeral pyre; my strength will still suffice me to lay myself beside my comrades, and so together with them to be mingled with the elements. Perchance beyond death I shall meet her once more whose words are with me to the end. Perchance along with her I shall enter into that very presence-chamber of omnipotent love where shadows end and reality begins."

He passed into the temple, and I saw him no more.

It is no wonder that I cannot now recall how I got back to the point from which I had started upon this strange adventure; but somehow or another I found myself looking again over the Aboo-Simbel rock and

AN UNKNOWN OASIS

down upon the river far below. The sailors had done their work for the day now; and soon I caught the sound of my own name borne aloft in the air. Clearly it must be getting late; I had been missed, and my friends were calling me. I hurried down the sand-slope, so easy of descent, so difficult to climb, and was soon on board our "dahabeeah," and changing for dinner. Somehow I could not bring myself to speak then of the things which I had seen and heard, so utterly incongruous did the thought of that old Greek seem to me to be with the commonplaceness of dining. Before daylight, next morning, we cast off our moorings and had entered on our homeward voyage; and Aboo-Simbel, with its kings and its desert mysteries, was left behind us for ever. Yet it may chance to some one who reads this to find himself some day at that wonderful spot; let him not fail to climb the sand-slope and strike across the desert, that so, perhaps, he too may alight upon this unknown oasis. He will not indeed see all that I saw, or hear what I heard. For the light in the lamp is dead, and with it the soul of the Greek has passed; but he will see the palm-trees and the temple in their shade, and hear the ripple of the water and the rustle of the leaves. Yet it is just possible that some mighty sand-storm of the desert has swept across this fair spot and for ever hidden it from the eye of mortal man.

AT ABOO-SIMBEL

It was at the close of a lovely day in January that Aboo-Simbel, the turning-point of our Nile voyage, was reached. We had hard work to get round the final bend, and, no novices in Nile delays, we had already begun to despair of mooring under the great temple that night. But, once in the long Aboo-Simbel reach, we sped away gaily before the wind, easily keeping our distance from a steam gun-boat which was following us on its way up to Wady Halfa. And now at last, dimly through our glasses—far distant still—we could make out the majestic figures sitting in the shadow of the mighty rock. The sun went down over the desert behind them; all the land blushed rosy red in the wonderful Nubian after-glow, and the red deepened into purple as the light of the gloaming died. The breeze, too, died with the dying light, and the gun-boat passed us, puffing scorn. It was long after dusk when we came to our moorings; but the waning moon would not be up till midnight, and we had determined to wait till then to present ourselves before the great king. Eagerly, after dinner, we looked from deck across the swiftly stealing stream to the eastern horizon for the first signs of moonrise; then we landed, and, toiling through the few yards of deep sand that separate the temple from the river, we found ourselves at the feet of Rameses. The moon was nearly up now, and we watched the pale light grow on those godlike faces; watched the placid, scornful smile come out as each one greeted yet again, as he had done so many

AT ABOO-SIMBEL

thousand times before, the rising moon. For 3000 years the kings have sat upon their thrones guarding the temple entrance, with their great hands spread out upon their knees, looking with stony gaze across their beloved Nile to the eastern hills and toward the rising of the sun and the moon; and by the light of the sun and moon the same contemptuous smile is ever there. Even more weird than its exterior, if not so wonderful, are the dim recesses of the temple hewn into the heart of the rock. You pass through rows of rudely sculptured columns that cast uncertain shadows in the fitful flare of the torches, till at last you come to where, with his back to the innermost wall, facing the far-off doorway through which alone light and air can find an entrance to his dreary dwelling, sits another statue of Rameses; and with him are three of the gods. Then if you would indeed commune with the genius of the place, bid your torch-bearers depart, and take your stand beside this great image of a great king; if haply some thrill of life may pass into him from you, and he may whisper to you the secret of the long dead days. But, more likely, his deathly influence will be the stronger, till,—

“Sick for his stubborn hardihood,
You seem to fail from out your blood,
And grow incorporate into him.”

But before the process of petrification is quite complete the loathly bats will flit about you, and their sickening scent oppress you, and while life is still in you, you will be fain to seek the outer air.

But Aboo-Simbel must not be seen by moonlight only, and if it be your turning-point, as it was ours, you will tarry there at least through a whole day. For, as every Nile traveller knows, the “dahabeeah” undergoes a complete transformation between the end of its

AT ABOO-SIMBEL

upward and the beginning of its downward voyage. Going up it is a graceful, white-winged sailing-vessel; coming down it is a clumsy, overgrown rowing-boat. The transformation scene takes time; the boom of the great sail has to be unshipped and stowed away, the rowing thwarts have to be cleared. So you may see the great kings in the glow of the saffron-tinted dawn, and basking in the colourless glare of noonday, and again when the evening shadows fall. Majestic at all times, yet by day they can make no attempt to conceal the ravages that time and tourists have made upon them. For of one the mighty head is fallen, and lies low in the sand at his feet; and all of them are scored all over with the names of men of every age and every nationality, from the Greek mercenaries of Psammetichus, who have left their record on a leg of the headless statue, to the latest of personally conducted tourists. But the name that will most deeply stir the modern English visitor is not carved on the Aboo-Simbel rock, but on a lowly tombstone at the feet of the great kings. It marks the grave of a young English officer who died here on his way back from the Soudan, and here was buried. But he, too, now is old, old as his surroundings, for

“ Though so young but yesternight,
Now he is as old as death.

He has seen the mystery hid
Under Egypt's pyramid;
By those eyelids pale and close,
Now he knows what Rameses knows.”

Though the sign of his faith does not mark this Christian's grave—it might perhaps only attract Moslem insults—yet its influence is not unfelt; for nightly from their place, low down in the southern sky, the stars of the Southern Cross look down with “shining eyes” upon the kings of Aboo-Simbel and upon this lonely grave.

AT ABOO-SIMBEL

Before you leave Aboo-Simbel you will probably climb the great sand-slope which reaches from the base of the temple to the top of the rock in which it is hewn, and the scene there repays your toil. To the west a boundless desert plateau, dotted all over with pyramidal hillocks, stretches away without sound or sign of life, for all one knows, till one nears the Atlantic shores. Nubia is the land of silence; from cataract to cataract silence reigns supreme, save where it is broken by the creaking of the water-wheels; but here is its very sanctuary. Go but a little way into the desert till you are beyond the faintest echo of your sailors' cheery song at their work far below; take your stand at the further side of one of these hillocks so that no glimpse of the Nile valley can come within your range of vision; and the eerie feeling will perhaps come over you that you alone are left alive in a dead world, till you hurry back to the edge of the cliff again to be reassured by the sight and sound of your crew: the crew whose work is now nearly finished. Probably by next daybreak you will have entered on the dreamy life of the descending voyage; now idly floating down the broad, brown river, or now as idly (you at least) listening to the monotonous chant of the sailors as they toil at the great oars. An enchanted life of careless ease, to which one looks back with longing from the midst of the fume and fret—how vain for by far the greater part—of London.

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

JUST where the narrow gorge of the Tepel opens out upon the wide valley of the Eger lies one of the many towns which, in divers tongues and sundry places throughout Europe, bear the name of Bath. Karlsbad—Charles's Bath, in memory of the discoverer of its springs, and to distinguish itself from its rivals—this one calls itself, and vaunts itself supreme. For a mile or more along the bed of the gorge, the two main streets of the town, serpent-like, twist themselves and turn, cleaving the one to the left, the other to the right bank of the winding stream; and from them steep side-streets strike up into, and ever encroach upon, the dark encircling pine-forest. On the right bank is the old town, with its picturesque corners and quaint red roofs, "full of eyes before and behind": on this side also, are the great Sprüdel spring, and the theatre, and one or two hotels. But most of the springs, the new villas and lodging-houses, and all the fashion of the place, are to be found on the left side of the river; here are gay *cafés*, and fascinating shops displaying all the novelties of Vienna. Here, too, the motley Karlsbad crowd disports itself. A strange crowd it is, this great company of the sick and the halt, waiting, not, indeed, for the moving of the waters (for these, more bountiful than the waters of Bethesda, are not merely at a certain season momentarily troubled by the Angel of Health and charged with his life-giving powers, but once for all, so charged by him long ages ago, they flow perennially), but waiting patiently, or slowly moving forward in long

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

line—no need here for that wild Bethesda rush—till each one's turn comes to pass before the nymph of the fountain, and by her to have the little glass, which every Karlsbader carries, filled with the bubbling and all but boiling liquid. A strange crowd gathered together out of every nation under heaven, and speaking tongues more diverse than confused the builders of Babel; as you elbow your way through it, you may rub shoulders with an English duke, and now with a Polish Jew, or find yourself avoiding the skirts of the longest-lineaged of Austrian princesses to tread upon those of the shoddiest of American heiresses. From six o'clock in the morning till between eight and nine, this water-promenade goes on under the stately colonnades which cover the springs, or along the river-side boulevards. You stand or move with the long *queue* till your turn comes to drink, then you promenade for half-an-hour or so till it is time to drink again, and all the while there is borne in upon your ears, above the confusing babel of tongues, the noble music of the band swelling out into some martial strain, and anon dying away in melodious wail. At last the crowd disperses for breakfast, to appear again later in the day, and take its pleasure in varied fashions—in the theatre, or at open-air concerts, lounging in the town *cafés*, or strolling to more distant ones in the woods, gambling, gossiping, smoking, drinking, flirting. The crowd is not a lovely one, and somehow, as one looks on jaundiced faces, or distorted limbs, the merriment appears a little forced, and one seems to hear more plainly than one is wont, despite the efficacy of the waters to keep him at bay, the beating of the wings of the Angel of Death. Anyhow, despite the sunshine and the laughter, there is suggestion enough of human sorrow about the place to prevent any of that surprise which George Eliot has somewhere said a traveller to this world, who knew nothing of the history of man's life

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

upon it, might feel at coming across, as one does at every turn throughout the Sunny South, the image of a great agony—the agony of the Cross. Here the Cross stands out conspicuous on an over-towering rock, and the outstretched arms of the plaintive figure upon it seem ready to embrace the whole town and all that careless crowd.

Luckily, there is something more at Karlsbad than its crowded boulevards; all round about it are the murmuring, fresh-scented pine-woods. You may strike away from the town by any of the innumerable walks, so freely studded with sign-posts, that penetrate to some tower of wide-extending view, or to some more or less popular suburban resort. You may go on till you have got far beyond the distant hum of the crowd, far beyond the last straggler from the town, till you have got into the heart of the great forest, and can listen to it in peace as it whispers its secret charm into your ear. A lizard scuttles away at your feet, the squirrels scamper merrily overhead, and perhaps a startled deer gives you one pleading, frightened look out of its great soft eyes, and then is off on the wings of the wind. Through the red stems of the pines you get glimpses of the wide plain which stretches away, dotted with many a quaint hamlet, to the highlands of Bohmer Wald—a fair, wide plain, across which the sunshine and the shadow play.

Here in perfect solitude you may dream away many an hour: dream if you like, of the old days when the Kaiser Karl came hunting through these woods with a great baying of hound and blast of horn, and doubtless, to his great surprise, chanced upon these boiling streams. A great personage in his day was this same Karl, though gone so long now, that I doubt if, of all the Englishmen who visit his Bath, there are half-a-dozen who know more of him than the name. Indeed, in spite of Mr

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

Bryce, the average Englishman's views about the Holy Roman Empire in general are apt to be a little misty; and about any emperor in particular the average Englishman cannot be said to possess any views at all. Yet there are links which connect Karl IV. with English history, and even with certain words and symbols very familiar to Englishmen of to-day. For this Karl was the son of that grim old warrior, John of Bohemia, who, having done much crusading against the heathen of Prussia, and therein lost one eye and the sight of both, yet lost not his stomach for fighting, but, stone-blind as he was, charged down upon the English chivalry at Crecy, and there finally lost his life, bequeathing to the victor of that well-stricken field his crest and motto, the three ostrich feathers and the *Ich Dien*, which we still know so well. And Karl in time became the father of an English Queen, the wife of the hero of Crecy's son, known to the Englishmen of those days, centuries before Anne Stuart appropriated the title, as "Good Queen Anne." Those were days when England and Bohemia were drawn very close together; when a Bohemian noble might win to wife a fair English girl, and then, in jealous fear for her dazzling beauty, seclude her for ever from the sight of all other men in some lonely castle in his own land, as did he of Engelhaus, the ruins of whose tower on its picturesque rock you may still see from the Karlsbad heights. They were days when Bohemian scholars sat at the feet of Wycliffe in Oxford, and English students were to be found in Prag. The Lollard movement in England and the Hussite in Bohemia acted and reacted upon one another. Queen Anne favoured and fostered them both, and the Lollard movement, at least, owed much to her influence. The Reformer of Henry VIII.'s time inherited the traditions of the Lollard of Richard II.'s, and England of to-day is what it is because

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

of the Reformation; so that, little as he thinks it, the English invalid who drinks of the Karlsbad waters owes some thanks to the mediæval Emperor, not merely for the discovery of these healing springs (little, perhaps, on that account, for someone else must have discovered them, if not he), but that by giving his daughter in marriage to an English king, he, all unconsciously, helped to mould the course of English thought. Some subtle influence through those wondrous links which bind together the men of the most distant ages and the most distant lands, connects Karl IV. and a Cook's tourist. It was not, indeed, from her father that Queen Anne got her tolerant religious views; he lived ever in dutiful submission to the Pope and the clergy; indeed, he was known contemptuously amongst his Bohemian subjects as *Pfaffen Kaiser*—the Parsons' Emperor.

But as we dreamily philosophise about Karl, and the links which make the whole world kin, a faint and far-off sound of music is wafted on the evening breeze. The evening concert is ending, and it ends, as the morning one begins, with a grand German hymn. I wonder, by-the-way, whether this pious custom has any connection with the superstition by reason of which, for long centuries, no Bohemian shepherd would blow into his pipe in the woodlands without certain precautions and preliminary furlings of a devotional nature (as Carlyle puts it), to propitiate thereby the wrath of the great Bohemian saint, Adalbert, once Bishop of Prag. For the story goes that the saint, sleeping somewhere in these woods, with a stone for his pillow, as was his wont, was roused suddenly from his slumber by the jovial strains piped out by a careless shepherd, and starting up, cursed the poor man in most unsaintly wise, so that he went stone-deaf for ever after. But however that may be, the strains of the evening hymn

THE BOHEMIAN BETHESDA

remind us that it is time to seek out amongst those woodland walks one that leads back, as the friendly sign-post tells you, to the town. As we go and mark on every side signs of volcanic action, we meditate on what was the origin and what may be the end of Karlsbad, and hazard the guess that these boiling waters were thrown up, not long before Karl discovered them, in one of those years of terror and portents in the middle of the fourteenth century, when the Black Death stalked through England, and earthquake upon earthquake seemed to shake the very foundations of the world; and that perchance in some future convulsion they may disappear (they *did* cease to flow for three days when Lisbon was laid low) and the fame of Karlsbad die, and the great forest spread itself once more over the Tepel gorge, its silence only broken by the sighing of the wind and the murmuring of the stream.

THE LIFTED VEIL

BUT now I stood and watched as a mother sang to her baby and clapped her hands, and, as I watched, the little lips drew apart till they formed the quaintest of curves, and the little face became all puckered up with merriment. No sound issued from the open mouth, yet one recognised the whole movement—behold! baby had laughed for the first time. And as I thought thereupon, it seemed to me that in the earliest laugh of this newcomer from another world to ours, a corner of the veil which hides so impenetrably that world from this was for a moment lifted. For, thought I, this first laugh marks thee off, baby, from all things round about thee as no mere denizen like them of earth, but a visitant from elsewhere. The puppy which came into the world when thou didst is much more at home in it than thou art. He can do all that thou canst, and many a thing beside—all but this one thing. He can cry, and sleep, and suck—ay, he can run about and play; but this he cannot do—in this laugh of thine he has not the remotest share; for in this thy first laugh thou hath touched the very divinest summit of laughter. As thou journeyest on through life thou shalt know laughter of many another sort than this—laughter of “the earth earthy,” and such as the animals have share in. Thou shalt know, please God, the happy laughter of the boy—outcome of gayest animal spirits; the skipping of the puppy is much akin to that. Thou mayest know, perchance, the full-blooded laugh of the prosperous man of the world—the contented grunt of the pig in his sty is of the same family—or the cackle of old age, which is

THE LIFTED VEIL

but the skeleton of laughter. Maybe, alas! that thou shalt know the ugly laugh which is nothing but a sneer, or the empty laughter of the fool; the one is like the jackal's snarl, and the other is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. But this first laugh has little else than the name to connect it with such later laughter; this is no promise of that which is to be on earth, not even of that which comes nearest to it in the scale of laughter—the genial laugh of kindly humour, for thou canst know nothing as yet of the comedy of life's disproportions and incongruities in which such laughter takes its rise. Rather is this laugh of thine the expression of some faint recollection of the glory of love, which is behind the veil, awakened by the mother's love now; it is not of the earth at all, but all of the heaven which lies about us in our infancy.

Nay, as I meditate thereupon, I solemnly declare that, were it not that our sense of the mysterious is so much excited, and yet so much confused, by mere vastness, we should be ready to confess that nothing more mysterious is to be found amongst all the immensities of space than this baby laugh; and I feel that, could we trace its genesis to its spring in the "far retreats of elemental mind," we should "know what God and man is." The ethereal mystery which lurketh in that laugh confuteth for me the philosophy of the materialist. He may write in his study, if it so pleaseth him, that here is nought mysterious at all, that here is only the automatic expansion and contraction of certain muscles, whose movement, perchance, has been set agog by some material wave out-flowing from the mother; but let him stand here by thy cradle, and look into the pure, clear deeps of a baby's eyes, and watch the wonder of that laugh as it ripples over thy face, and then say, if he dare, that there is nothing spiritual here.

THE LIFTED VEIL

Yet once again, it may be, before thou drawest to the great deep from which now thou hast but lately arisen, there may come to thee

"A whisper from thy dawn of life, a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death,"

and once again thy face be irradiated by a laugh as divine as that which even now transfigured it. It may hap to thee on some such wise as I but lately saw; for I stood over the bed of one who had even a lesser journey to make to reach life's western gate than that which thou hast travelled from its eastern. Far different was the body which lay on that bed, from the soft, round, dimpled ball of flesh that nestles in thy cradle; a body wasted with long disease, a face wrinkled with age and racked with pain, was there. Yet as I stood over that bed the veil was lifted for a moment, even as thou but now didst lift it, by a laugh; for as I watched, the sufferer awoke from such troubled slumber as now for her took the place of sleep, and as she recognised, howsoever dimly, the face of a loved one, long absent, bending down towards hers, then the happiest, divinest laugh that I have ever seen overspread those wasted features, and the glorious light of love illumined them. Memory might be clouded and intellect shattered, the silver cord loosed and the golden bowl broken; but that happy laugh told that love still reigned supreme in the innermost recesses of the soul—love stronger than death.

And as this first laugh of thine has lifted the veil for me, and shown some glimpse of that heaven from which thou hast come, "trailing clouds of glory," so did that other laugh pierce the shadows of that denser than pre-natal darkness, as it seems to us, which shrouds the gates of death, and show that, perchance, the region beyond those gates is only dark to us because of its

THE LIFTED VEIL

excess of light. For while all of earth was fading from that sufferer's ken, earth's voices dying away for her into a dim, far distance, so that hardly could she hear them any more or answer them at all; yet love, as this laugh seemed to show, if it could thus, across all barriers which separate what we call the living and the dying, flash its message full of the vigour of life—love, while all the other powers of life were waning and night enfolding them, was waxing and shining more and more unto the perfect day.

So may it hap to thee, baby, that when the long, long years are passed, the light of heaven shall once again burst in laughter on thy face; and that once again, for someone who bends then over thy dying bed, as I now bend over thy cradle, thou shalt lift the veil and reveal the heavenly

“ . . . gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream.’

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

DEAR, DEAR CHARLES,—Thou complainedst once that none was left to call thee “Charley,” nor dare I so far presume; but “Charles” I will call thee who art dearer far to me, and far more real, than all but one or two of the men and women whom I daily meet in this great Babylon which thou didst love so well as often to shed tears in its motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life.

Perchance, too, now, thou hast found again them who call thee “Charley,” and in their company it is like that thou wilt care little what I think of thee, or how I call thee. Yet cannot I forbear to lay this small offering at thy shrine, my Saint Charles. Sancte Carole! Thou never thoughtest to attain the dignity of Saintship, didst thou? Yet I mind me how once, in merry mood, thou didst imagine thyself writing a little book for children, on titles of honour, and illustrating it by picturing thyself passing through eleven grades, beginning as plain Mr C. Lamb, and ending as Pope Innocent—higher than which, as thou saidst, nothing is upon earth. But pity it were to leave a round dozen of titles incomplete for lack of one, more especially as now it is not necessary that we should confine ourselves, in thinking of thee, to earthly titles; so let me add this crowning honour, and hail thee as St Charles. But, indeed, now I think of it, thou didst once have some prevision of this honour; didst not thou write to Manning—(what mortal man, before or since, ever received such letters?)—“When we

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right-hand sign-post, and the goats the left. Stript of allegory, you must know that the sheep are—I, the Apostles, and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, etc., etc. The goats are the atheists . . . and Godwin, and M-nn-ng, and that Thyestoean crew! Egad, how my saintship sickens at the idea."

But, St Charles, there be many I know who would begrudge thee thy canonisation. What! say they, wilt thou make a saint of a man who could write such flippant words as these; of a man, too, who often got drunk. Ah! Charles, thou wert only too bitterly conscious of thy weaknesses, as am I also. But which, I wonder, of these super-excellent objectors to thy saintship, ever fulfilled throughout life so bravely, so steadily, so cheerily as thou didst, such a dreary, even terrible, round of duty. With that dark cloud of matricide in the background, overshadowing all thy days; and with that horror, worse than any Damoclean sword, the threat of insanity, suspended ever over the head of thy best beloved, and over thine own too; what wonder if thou didst sometimes drown all thought in what thou calledst (quoting "hearty, cheerful Mr Cotton") a "lusty brimmer."

And didst not thou sacrifice, on the altar of duty, the dearest delights, the fondest hopes of man? One may not draw aside the veil which shrouds thine innermost penetralia farther than thou thyself hast cared to withdraw it; but even with such light as thou hast permitted to find entrance there, one may guess that, had it not been for thy stern sense of duty, Alice W——n might indeed have called thee husband, and the "Dream Children" of that most exquisite of Elia's Essays might have had other than dream existences. Who may read without being moved those most plaintive words: "We

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name." Yet who knows but that in the strange land where now thou art, dreams such as this may be found to have had more of true reality in them than had many of the stubborn and so solid-seeming facts of life.

And "drunkard!"—that, of course, thou never wert, though I have heard the scandalous term flung at thee. Was it not flung at thee in life, too, by that "*Damned Quarterly Review*"? Oh, Charles, I am afraid those were the very words thou usedst when that most respectable organ took Elia's "Confessions of a Drunkard" as somewhat too literally applicable to thyself. But ill indeed would such term describe one whose self-restrained life of hard-working, honourable poverty, with its little, simple, hard-earned pleasures, Elia has described with so loving a touch in the essay on "Old China," and which was, in truth, thy life and Mary's. And out of that poverty, or the comparative ease which succeeded to it, with what a lavish hand didst thou give to those even poorer than thyself. St Martin had not a readier hand to give than hadst thou, St Charles. "Pray use the enclosed £50, and pay me when you can." Dost thou remember writing so to poor Godwin? And does not another friend of thine tell how once, in thine own shy, stammering way, thou saidst suddenly to him in his trouble: "My dear boy, I have a quantity of useless things; I have in my desk a—a—a hundred pounds that I don't know what to do with—take it."

Thou wert indeed a prince at giving, great as thy much-loved Sydney's self; as one of thy friends wrote of thee at thy death—

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

“Thou, too, like Sydney would’st have given
The water, thirsty and near heaven;
Nay, were it wine filled to the brim,
Thou hadst looked hard, but given like him.”

But, dear Charles, I fear me that thou didst seldom or never go to church on Sundays; and then did not the excellent Mr Southey complain of thy lack of “sound religious feeling.” Indeed, I must confess that thy words do, at times, smack somewhat of irreverence; yet surely they were too playful ever to have hurt the most susceptible of souls. Who could be really hurt, for instance (unless, indeed, G. D.’s spouse were), at thy account of a projected comedy. “The story is as simple as G. D., and the language as plain as his spouse. The characters are three women to one man; which is more than laid hold of him in the ‘Evangelical.’ I think that prophecy squinted towards my drama.” But I believe it was that saddest of Elia’s essays, “New Year’s Eve,” which drew forth Mr Southey’s protest. Thou wert too honest, my Charles, to profess a certainty which thou didst not feel about that world wherein thou now findest thyself. Thou lovedst this world, and wert not afraid to say so. “I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of the streets . . . Sun and sky and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of the fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and irony itself—do these things go out with life?” . . . And here, I think, thou wouldst have quoted (incorrectly, belike, as was thy usual habit, Charles), had they been in existence then, the tender lines of a later singer, who now, too, despite his protest, has gone from this sweet human life; and so, perchance, thou knowest him now,

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

and lovest him, for he had as gentle a spirit as thine own even; and thus he sang:

“You promise heavens free from strife,
Pure truth and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
So sweet, I fain would breathe it still:
Your chilly stars I can forego,
This warm kind world is all I know.”

Well! it may be that there is here a lack of “sound religious feeling,” but, for my part, I like the honesty of it; and I know, too, of a certain well-accredited early Christian writer, who sayeth that “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” Perhaps thou didst not altogether fulfil this latter condition; but if there be anyone who can show a better title than thou to be called truly religious, according to the first part of the Apostolic maxim, mightily should I like to see that man.

Strong in love, thou wert really strong in faith too, stronger than perhaps thou knewest: what but strong faith was at the back of brave words like these, written after one of those sad walks across the fields to the old asylum at Hoxton, hand in hand with the sister whom thou must leave there for a time: “By God’s blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget that we are assailable; we are strong, for the time, as rocks — ‘the wind is tempered to the shorn lambs.’” Or these others, after the passing away of the cloud: “God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all his dispensations to mankind.”

But it was thy love of all things human, thy sympathy

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

with all the little weaknesses and the little follies of our poor humanity which gave to thy quaint humour its peculiar quality of loveableness, and made it such as none other has ever been. We have never seen thy like in the sixty long years that have gone since thou didst leave the world—so much the poorer for thy passing; and I wot well that we shall never look upon thy like again. Humourists we have had amongst us, and still have, who can sneer at our pitiful weaknesses, and stab them with their brilliant wit; but at the back of thy laughter was never a sneer, but rather the tear of sympathy; for, in spite of all its twinkling merriment, thine was

“A liquid melancholy eye
From whose pathetic soul-fed springs
Seemed surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things.”

Though, indeed, thy sympathy for humanity was not altogether without limitation. Did not Elia confess, in his “Imperfect Sympathies,” that he could never like a Scotchman, nor find a Scotchman to like him. But I verily believe it is just because the Scot has escaped his fair share of human weakness that thou couldst never sympathize with him, nor he understand thee. Certain it is that the quality of thy humour accordeth not with the Scotch sense, which, indeed, recogniseth it not for humour at all. I remember once experimenting with that most exquisitely droll letter of thine about the dog Dash—dost thou remember it?—upon a Scots cousin of mine. Nay, shrink not from me, Charles, if I confess myself half a Scot: “Dear P——” (so runs thy letter to thy friend Patmore), “Excuse my anxiety, but how is Dash? . . . Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in his conversation? . . . Try him with hot water; if he won’t lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it . . . you can’t be too careful. Has he bit any of

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

the children yet? If he has, have them shot; and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. . . . You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways; it might amuse Mrs P—— and the children. . . . What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but I remember you don't read German. But Mrs P—— may; so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—'Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness as you would avoid fire or a precipice' . . . the Germans are certainly profounder than we . . . etc., etc." And all that my Scotch relative said when I read him this letter was to the effect that though it was very right to take every precaution in the case of suspected hydrophobia, he did not think that the advice about the children could be meant seriously; and that he did not see any great profundity in the German's words—many Scotchmen had said, or, at least, written, things more profound.

Yet hath the Scot a fine humour of his own, and, there have been Scots who have recognised thine and loved thee. Perchance thou hast even met with some of them now: yet I think not that thou wouldst much frequent that quarter of the Elysian fields where Scotchmen most do congregate; nor do I fancy that thou art often to be found in the company of Apostles and Popes, with whom thou didst rank thyself in that letter to Manning. Rather do I dream of thee as herding with the shades of thy loved Elizabethans; or with thy heroes of the 17th century—Marvell and Cowley and Wither, and, above all, with him who wrote of "Urn Burial": and in the company of their spirits wilt thou not be consoled for the loss of their folios?

A LETTER TO CHARLES LAMB

"And art thou mingled then among
Those famous sons of ancient song?
And do they gather round and praise
Thy relish of their nobler lays?
Waxing in mirth to hear thee tell
With what strange mortals thou didst dwell!
At thy quaint sallies more delighted
Than any's—long among them lighted.

'Tis done, and thou hast joined a crew
To whom thy soul was justly due;
And yet I think where'er thou be
They'll scarcely love thee more than we."

Yet the friend who so wrote, and all the others whom thou lovedst so well in the flesh—and who so loved thee—they, I wot, will gather round thee too. All, all will come about thee, "the old familiar faces," or what pass for faces in the land of spirits. And so, I say again, thou wilt not care to lend an ear to my poor sounding of thy praise. And ah! what a vain pretence it is, this poor playing at correspondence. Thou, indeed, art a more "distant correspondent" than him whom Elia found such whimsical difficulties in addressing, thy doings and thy surroundings much harder to guess at than Elia pretended his to be: to venture on such a letter as this, might well indeed remind thee of "one of Mrs Rowe's superscriptions, 'Alexander to Strephon in the Shades,'" and certain it is that "Cowley's Post-Angel is no more than would be expedient in such an intercourse." But dost thou remember that that same excellent Mrs Rowe published also twenty letters from the "Dead to the Living," amongst them one from "Delia to Emilia, giving her a description of the invisible regions and the happy state of the inhabitants of Paradise"? Let thy "Post-Angel," in answer to my humble greeting, bring such communication back from thee, and I will, even more gratefully than now I do, subscribe myself thine—

PHILAMNOS.

THE FREAKS OF FAME

THE conditions upon which men—and women too (is it not of the Lady Godiva that the words are written)—may “build themselves an everlasting name” are not a little curious and not a little varied. We all know what Godiva did; she “took away the tax.” And we (unhappy ratepayers that we are) recognise at once her right to undying fame, and only wish that Mr Goschen could see his way to a similar and as successful mode of dealing with local taxation: no question but that in that case his name too should live for ever. We may take “this woman of a thousand summers back,” if we will, as a type of countless others of the “immortal dead” who have done or are believed to have done great deeds and good, of whose title to immortality, the reason and the right thereof, there is no manner of dispute. Then there are those whose infamy is no less clear. In the dealings of Fate with either of those classes there is no fickleness to be found. But there is another class amongst those who have joined the majority with whom her dealings are in nowise so simple a matter. At one moment Fame assigns them a place amongst “the choir invisible who make undying music in the world”; anon she points at them as of the number of those whose name “shall ever be a name of scorn.” And there is yet a fourth class whose fame is entirely colourless, of whose deeds we know nothing, whether they were bad or good, who have attained immortality for reasons altogether unaccountable—by the purest freak. For who shall resolve those mysterious workings of Fate whereby it happens that

THE FREAKS OF FAME

out of the millions and millions of "forked radishes," differing one from another only in having heads more or less "fantastically carved," that go to make up the common-place population of the world, the name of one here or there shall be known familiarly for all time; whilst all the rest have gone down into silence—their names "interred with their bones," or at most inscribed and legible for a year or two upon the stones which mark their graves. For instance, a servant girl two thousand years ago goes one night to "answer the door," as her fellows of to-day would phrase it, and, little as she guessed at such an outcome of the performance of that most ordinary of every-day duties, she then and there won her immortality; and in times she never dreamed of, in lands she never heard of, the very school-children can tell of "a certain damsel named Rhoda, who went to hearken as Peter knocked at the door of the gate," and of how the foolish girl, when she heard his voice, ran back to tell her mistress, forgetting altogether in her joy to let the poor man in. It would no doubt considerably astonish you to hear that the servant who opens, or neglects to open, the door for you at some house to-day, should be the subject of a discourse in Timbuctoo a thousand years hence. Yet why not? I chanced the other day on a sermon upon "Rhoda," by a popular Anglican divine. This is no solitary instance, but simply the one which came first to hand, of that strange trick of fate which mixes up the infinitely little with the eternally great. For, surely it seems passing strange to find this girl's name amongst the "immortal lights" that have

"Risen up into the sky,
To shine there everlastingly
Over the plain, where that dead age
Did its now silent warfare wage—
O'er that wide plain, now wrapt in gloom,
Where many a splendour found its tomb."

THE FREAKS OF FAME

But to turn to those, and their name too is legion—with whom Fate has dealt not so much fantastically as fitfully. They are great unquestionably, and no one is astonished that their name lives—but whether great saints or great villains we can by no means determine. We have no sooner comfortably settled down to one view of their character than some new revelation forces us to take up a directly opposite view. Let us take as our example that great magnate of the realm in Henry VI.'s reign—the Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole. To most of us he is most familiarly known as he appears in Shakespeare: the splendid noble, handsome and accomplished, unscrupulous and cruel, who, when as Henry's proxy he goes to wed Queen Margaret, "steals away the ladies' hearts of France," the Queen's apparently along with the others; he is a traitor to his country as well as his king; he contrives the murder of the Duke of Gloucester—the good Duke Humphrey, and the disgrace of his Duchess. We shrink from him in spite of all his brilliancy with as great loathing as does the king.

"Lay not thy hands upon me;
Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting,
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!
Upon thine eyeballs murderous tyranny
Sits in grim majesty, to fright the world."

And when the end comes, and his banishment is followed hard by his murder at sea—his ducal head hacked off by "paltry, servile, abject drudges," as he calls them—terrible as the end is, we feel it to have been richly deserved; though even so, we cannot altogether withhold our sympathy from the Queen as she enters, clasping the head, and crying,

"Who can cease to weep and look on this!
Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast:
But where's the body that I should embrace?"

THE FREAKS OF FAME

And Shakspeare's view of Suffolk is fairly borne out by the public annals of his time; at all events, he was impeached on a charge of high treason and banished.

But we find it difficult to do other than completely change our estimate of the man when we come in the "Paston Letters," across that most touching farewell to his son, written on the eve of his banishment and, as it turned out, of his death.

"My dear and well-beloved son (he writes), I beseech our Lord in Heaven, the Maker of all the world, to bless you, and to send you ever grace to love Him, and to dread Him, to the which, as far as a father may charge his child, I both charge you and pray you to set all your spirits and wits to do, and to know His holy laws and commandments, by the which ye shall, with His great mercy, pass all the great tempests and troubles of this wretched world. And that also wittingly ye do nothing for love nor dread of any earthly creature that should displease Him. And there as any frailty maketh you to fall, beseech His mercy soon to call you to Him again with repentance, satisfaction, and contrition of your heart, never more in will to offend Him.

Secondly, next Him above all earthly things to be true liegeman in heart, in will, in thought, in deed, unto the King, our aldermost high and dread Sovereign Lord, to whom both you and I be so much bound to. . . .

Thirdly, in the same wise, I charge you, my dear son, alway, as ye be bounden by the commandment of God to do, to love, to worship, your lady and mother; and also that ye obey alway her commandments, and to believe her counsels and advices in all your works, the which dread not, but shall be best and truest to you.

Furthermore, as far as a father may and can, I charge

THE FREAKS OF FAME

you in any wise to flee the company and counsel of proud men, of covetous men, and of flattering men . . . and to draw to your company good and virtuous men, and such as be of good conversation and of truth, and by them ye shall never be deceived nor repent you of.

Moreover, never follow your own wit in no wise, but in all your works, of such folks as I write of above, ask your advice and counsel; and doing thus with the mercy of God ye shall do right well, and live in right much worship and great heart's rest and ease.

And I will be to you as good lord and father as my heart can think.

And last of all as heartily and as lovingly as ever father blessed his child on earth, I give you the blessing of our Lord and of me, which of His infinite mercy increase you in all virtue and good living; and that your blood may by His grace from kindred to kindred multiply in this earth to His service, in such wise as after departing from this wretched world here, ye and they may glorify Him eternally amongst His angels in Heaven.

Written of mine hand

The day of my departing fro' this land,

Your true and loving father,

SUFFOLK."

If the burst of rhyme at the end remind us somewhat of the poetical effusion of Mr Joe Gargery, it does not detract from, but rather enhance, the simple nobility of the letter. It is a letter which deserves to live, and we are loth to believe in the writer's infamy. We simply confess ourselves puzzled; falling back for what satisfaction it may give us upon Mr Tulliver's criticism of life, which, indeed, contains the sum of all the philosophies. "It's a puzzlin' world," said Mr Tulliver; so it is, and even when a man is well out of its puzzlement will not infrequently beset his reputation.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

THE day had come at last; that day which still through the mists of many years—far more than I care to number—stands out in my memory more vividly than yesterday. Yet I remember too how we had kept on flattering ourselves, almost to the last, that the day was far off. To a boy of seventeen years, seven weeks presents an almost endless vista; and seven weeks before, we had come home from school to spend our holidays together for the last time. Surely there has never since been such a brilliant summer as was that summer long ago. At the end of those seven weeks my brother was to sail for Australia; but we had made a compact with ourselves whereby we hoped to cheat the shadow of that coming day of much that it would fain have gathered into its darkening embrace. At the end of six weeks there was to be a great *fête* in our village (“Feet” the villagers always called it), and we were to do our part in the day’s festivities by getting together an “Eleven” of our school friends to play an “Eleven” of villagers. This cricket match had been the subject of much discussion at school; and all through the beginning of our holidays it stood out as a friendly screen hiding the dark day that lay behind it. The *fête*-day was still a long way off—five weeks—a month—a fortnight—so we kept saying to ourselves; and, until that was over, our compact bound us to think of the day of parting only as of some dread thing indefinitely distant. On the whole we kept our compact bravely and well; though, for me at least, ever and anon the wistful gaze

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

of our mother, as she watched us together, would break it down hopelessly. Whenever we so far forgot our compact as to speak of parting we used to fortify ourselves by protesting that, together or apart, it could make no difference—we should always be all in all, one to another. I now seem to feel that our mother, as she watched and heard us, knowing more than we of life, kept ever repeating to herself, “beating it in upon her weary brain as though it were the burden of a song,” that it could never be quite the same again—“never the same again.”

Inexorably time’s “petty pace—to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow—crept in from day to day”; and, as I have said, the *fête*-day was over and done, the day of parting had come at last.

Sometimes in a nightmare dream the moment of my awakening on that morning comes back to me, and I awake again, as I awoke then, to a sense of hopeless misery. Yet I need not the aid of sleep to recall any minute of that day: of each and all the record is too deeply cut upon my heart ever to fade from memory.

Our beds were side by side—so I had ever remembered them from the time when they were but tiny cots—and at waking I looked across, as I was ever used to do, at my brother’s bed, and saw for the last time the curly head deep pillowed there. Not now, as often times before, when I would have him forth to bathe in the river on the bright summer mornings, did I rouse him with cheery shout; but with something of reverence I stole round until I could get a glimpse of the sleeper’s face; peaceful enough now it was, and with a smile upon it, but with traces of tears as though he had passed through a storm of weeping in the night hours. I would leave him as long as might be in his happy unconsciousness; but he awoke before I had finished

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

dressing, and I saw with his full awakening the sense of trouble growing into his gaze.

We had arranged to spend the morning in saying good-bye to all our favourite haunts in the stables and the garden. Sadly, and not without tears, we went the round of all the pets, from the pony to the pigeons; I seemed to be taking leave of them all as much as he. Infantine memories were roused by the two little plots marked out with shells which still went by the name of the boys' gardens; and later and sadder memories by the old potting-shed, where once in evil hour we had discovered the gardener's half-filled pipe, and to our shame and discomfiture had completed between us his unfinished work.

Then must my brother go to receive the farewell blessing of our old nurse, who lived in dignified retirement in the village: in retirement from nursing duties—that is to say, not from work altogether; for she was now established in “Business” as she termed it. What *she*, with a grasp of abstract ideas unto which her neighbours failed to attain, thus somewhat grandiloquently described, *they* were wont to designate in a more concrete way as her “winder.” “She’n nowt but her *winder* to look to for a living now, poor soul,” so would they speak of her. I remember how that word never failed to recall to us the educational system of Dotheboys Hall, as exemplified in Mr Squeers’ dealing with the first class in English spelling and philosophy. “C-l-e-a-n clean — verb active — to make bright or scour—w-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder—a casement: and, said Mr Squeers, when a boy knows this out of the book he goes and does it; it’s the same principle as the use of the globes.” But I am told that this generation does not know Dickens. So to go back to our old nurse — “Business” or “Winder”—the material realities which

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

lay behind either expression were these — that above her cottage door was nailed a little board proclaiming that Ellen Smith was “licensed to sell Tobacco, Snuff and *Settera*”; while almost her whole stock-in-trade, consisting of bottles of sweets, papers of pins, boot-laces and oranges, some patent medicines and a roll of tobacco, were displayed to view in the cottage window. It was just, I well remember, as we turned to leave the cottage, having said our adieux, that I heard for the last time my brother’s ringing laugh. His was a laugh worthy indeed of the name. The very spirit of laughter seemed for the moment to be incarnate in him. It was many days before this that I had last heard his laughter, and, as I have said, I have not heard it since. It came on this wise:—as we turned to go our old nurse pressed upon him, along with her parting benediction, a little packet from amongst her patent medicines. Somewhere in the recesses of her cottage she kept hidden away a great jar of pills: therefrom she would periodically make up little paper parcels and place them in her window labelled according to her fancy. The one of these which she now placed in my brother’s hand, confidently assuring him that it contained a certain preventive against any ill effect of the deadly climate in the outlandish parts whither he went, of which she was ready to believe the worst, was announced on the outside to contain “Tick-toller-rue pills.” Something in this so touched his sense of the ludicrous that his laugh resounded all down the village street. And even now, though Ellen Smith has long retired from “business” to the repose of the churchyard; though no board above the door proclaims the cottage now to be a house of merchandise; and though the window is a window only, and not technically a “winder”; yet do I never pass the spot but a vision of the old shop rises

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

up in my mind, and faint echoes of my brother's laughter come to me across the years.

It is not for me to withdraw the veil from the hours which remained of that last day till the evening train should finally carry off my brother to London, there to join the ship which was to bear him across the waters of "the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea": they were spent in that most sacred of all sacred conference—the farewell words of mother and son.

Can it be, we think, that the moment of the very last good-bye will ever come, the very last look, the very last kiss, when there may not be at least one more? It comes, alas, full surely, and it is gone we hardly know how. And so it actually was that that night my mother and I found ourselves alone, and the sunshine of the house gone:

"And what to her should be the end,
And what to me remained of good?
To her, her cheerless widow-hood,
And unto me, no second friend."

But all that is long, long years ago. I live my dreamy life in the dreamy house, quite alone now; for my mother has gone a longer journey than my brother even. From him come letters—from her never a one—telling how different is his life to mine; how he mixes in the great world of men and affairs, and prospers therein; how he has gained a wife and I (which is not quite the same thing) a sister; and in process of time I learn how, without any say of mine (which seems to me a strange thing), I have entered into new relationships and become an uncle. And then at last comes a letter which says that my brother is coming home. (He still calls it Home then!) Yet my heart misgives me lest I should fail to recognise in this one, who is now husband and father and man of the world, him whom I knew of old only as a boy, brother, and son.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

And when at last the meeting comes and a tall strong man of middle age shakes me by the hand with a "Well, old fellow, how are you?" as though we had parted yesterday; when I would fain have "fallen upon his neck and kissed him," then did I indeed feel to the full how impenetrable is the veil of years. Yet for one moment the veil did lift, for one moment the mists of time rolled back and we were boys again. It was when in the sober twilight we stood together by our mother's grave in the quiet churchyard. Then, indeed, grown up Englishmen though we were, we fell into each other's arms and kissed as we had done when boys—no man watching us; and for the moment a mother's hand seemed to rest in blessing upon each one's head. Such a moment may not last nor come again; and upon the evening breeze there came to me the whispered echo of her old thought—

"There follow a mist and a weeping rain
And things are never the same again"—

never the same again.

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

WE have all heard of that worthy who, after reading the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, remarked that it was rather too full of quotations. The criticism will yield us one distinguishing note of a true classic. The writer who is "full of quotations" in the sense that Gray was, has made good his claim to a place among the Immortals. But among the Immortals—a goodly band—there is a select company who live not only in quotations, who have not only here and there given to some thought an expression so exquisitely apt or so superlatively lovely that it has forthwith become familiar to all men as household words, but whose whole work is alive—alive as it was on the first day that its author breathed into it the breath of life; alive, because it deals worthily with the deepest things of human life, its passions, its mysteries, which are the same for all time. We have reached a higher platform now in the Temple of Fame, and a very much narrower one. Of those who have attained to it we might almost reckon up the number on the fingers of a man's hands. There is an even still more select company, consisting of but one or two who stand upon the very pinnacle of the temple, who not only live throughout all ages, because they have sounded the deeps which are common to all, but who seem to belong equally to every age; to be ever at home upon the ever-varying surface of the ages; whose sympathies are so universal and humour so genial, who have so forecast the years, as to understand the foibles, and fashions, and eccentricities of all after-times as well as

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

of their own. Of English poets—of such at least as we are far enough removed from in point of time to judge of securely—Shakspeare alone has this note of supreme greatness. We all feel his modernness as we feel that of no other writer outside our own age; and a thousand years hence he will still be amongst the moderns. But besides this modernness of spirit, which we have come to take for granted in him, we are every now and again startled by some chance phrase, some fragment of conversation which seems literally prophetic of a nineteenth century problem or craze, invention or event, undreamed of or unparalleled, as we imagined, in the Elizabethan days. Here are some instances jotted down almost at haphazard. The lady doctor who has walked the hospitals and taken all the degrees of medicine is surely a novelty of the Victorian age; but how could the *Zeitgeist* introduce her to an astonished world more aptly than with the words of Lafeu to the King in *All's Well that Ends Well*? (II. i. 82).

"What 'Her' is this?" (Says the astonished World with the King).

"Why, Doctor She, my lord" (says the *Zeitgeist* with Lafeu).

In Queen Elizabeth's days women did not dream of entering Parliament, as now they do; but when the dream is fulfilled, and when the Prime Minister of that day would give the finishing stroke to the subjection of men, she can but quote the words of Mrs Page in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (II. i.), and say:

"I'll exhibit a Bill in the Parliament for the putting down of men."

There was no society of vegetarians or of teetotallers in the sixteenth century that I wot of; yet if the Vegetarian Society of England to-day is in want of a motto, I commend to them an extract from the conversation of those two most excellent knights Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch (*Twelfth Night*, I. iii. 90).

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

Sir Andrew: Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has; but I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.

Sir Toby: No question.

And in all seriousness I commend other well-known words of this same dear Sir Toby to all Good Templars, Blue Ribbon Armies, and other Total Abstinence Societies of Great Britain:

"Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

Again, how could an old-fashioned soldier nowadays find better words in which to express his grievances about the abolition of purchase and the rise of the competitive examination system; how could he more forcibly pour scorn upon the production of the modern military mathematical schools than by quoting Iago's growl at Cassio:

"For sooth a great arithmetician,

Who never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric
Wherein the toga'd consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership."

Othello, I. i.

It might have been with a special view of opposing the Channel Tunnel (though I have never heard that Philip II. floated a company for its construction) that Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Gaunt the words, which we all know so well, about "this England":

"This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;

This precious stone set in the silver sea
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
Against the envy of less happier lands."

Richard II., II. ii.

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

The Irish difficulty is ever with us. Chief Secretary after Chief Secretary rises up to cope with it; but what can any of them say but repeat to their Sovereign the words of Green to Richard II.:

"Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland,
Expedient manage must be made, my liege."

But even Shakspeare cannot give us any very clear hint about the lines upon which the expedient manage is to move.

When the old folks of to-day tell us that servants are not now what they once were, how can they find fitter words than Orlando's in *As you Like It* (II. iii.) to express their regret for

"The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meed";

and their disgust with

"the fashion of *these* times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion,
And, having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having."

The Alpine club is a modern enough development, one would have thought, of English activity; yet where will they find their aims and ambitions more tersely set forth than in Mowbray's words in *Richard II.*, I. i.:

"to run afoot
Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,
Or any other ground inhabitable,
Wherever Englishman durst set his foot."

There could be no more perfect presentment of the spiritualist "medium" than in Glendower, or of the sceptical critic of his folly than in Hotspur:

I can call spirits from the vasty deep (says the Welshman).
Why so can I or any man;
But, will they come when you do call for them? (says Hotspur).
Henry IV., III. i.

Puck, with his "girdle round about the earth in forty

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

minutes," would not be particularly astonished even by the marvels of electricity, on which our age so piques itself. And the timid theologian, somewhat inconsequent and illogical withal, as he shrinks in horror from what he conceives may be the outcome of Darwinism, might find himself repeating some words of Caliban's, and protesting that, according to these new-fangled theories,

"We shall . . .
. . . all be turned to barnacles, or to apes
With foreheads villainous low." *Tempest*, IV. i.

The London tradesmen in the riots the other day might have found a spokesman of their grievances in the Mayor of Henry VI.:

"Pity the city of London, pity us!
.
(the mob)
Have filled their pockets full of pebble stones.
.
Our windows are broke down in every street
And we for fear compell'd to shut our shops."
Henry VI., III. i.

And the following conversation between Lucy and Somerset (again in *Henry VI.*), surely it was repeated not very long ago between a distinguished soldier and an extinguished statesman still living:

Soldier: Too late comes rescue: he is ta'en or slain;
For fly he could not, if he would have fled;
And fly would Gordon never, though he might.

Statesman: If he be dead, brave Gordon, then adieu!

Soldier: His fame lives in the world, his shame in you.

But one might go on endlessly with these "modern instances": they may consist for the most part perhaps in nothing more than curious verbal coincidences; nevertheless, they could not occur, in such profusion at all events, except in the writings of that one whose scene

SHAKSPEARE AND MODERN "ISMS"

of action, as Heine has finely said of Shakspeare, is the globe itself—his unity of place; whose period of action is eternity—his unity of time; and whose hero representing the central point, the unity of interest, is in conformity with these two unities—whose hero is humanity.

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

MANY centuries before the semi-mythical Rosamund Clifford, whom we all know about, lived this other Rosamund, whom the world, in spite of Alfieri's tragedy, has forgotten, though her story is much more authentic and her fate more tragic than that of Henry II.'s leman. Fair and faulty as she was this earlier one, but fierce withal as Queen Eleanor herself.

The sixth century, in which she lived, was an age of notable women; for many years the Roman world had been ruled by two of them—the shameless Theodora and the equally shameless Antonina, through their uxorious husbands, the Emperor Justinian and the hero Belisarius. And now, outside the limits of the Roman world, arose another just as shameless as they, Rosamund, Princess of the Gepidæ, Queen of the Lombards.

Her path in life crossed that of Alboin, and destiny began to weave its dark toils about them while she was yet a child. All her life long at the court of her grandfather, Turisund, King of the Gepidæ, she must have heard men speak, and heard her maidens sing of the rivalry in deeds of war between her nation and the neighbouring people of the Lombards, and she must have heard the women's songs turn to wailing when the news came one day that Alboin, the young prince of the Lombards, had overcome and slain in single combat her uncle, the king's son, the pride of the Gepid youth. Still greater must have been the excitement at Turisund's court, and the wonder amongst the maidens,

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

when it was noised abroad that this same champion, Alboin, was about to adventure himself, with only forty companions, into the very jaws of the lion; was coming to demand the investiture of the armour of his slaughtered son at the hands of King Turisund himself. For so was the law of the Lombards—that the prince might not take his seat amongst the warriors at the king's table, however doughty his deeds, until he had received his arms from a foreign and a royal hand. Alboin came, and, in spite of the blood with which he was stained, was received with all honour by the Gepid king, and entertained right royally, according to the laws of hospitality as laid down in the Gothic code of honour. We can imagine the ladies of the court, and the young princess amongst them, looking on at that strange feast from a balcony, or from behind the rude hangings of the hall. All went smoothly for a time; but a sob at last escaped from the aged king, and a muttered imprecation on the slayer of his son, who now sat in that loved son's seat. The king's grief roused the wrath of Cunimund, his only surviving son, Rosamund's father; and he began to heap insult and gibe upon the Lombard guests. "Verily," said he, "their smell is like that of the mares that feed upon our Sarmatian plains." "You have felt, too, how strongly they kick," retorted a Lombard; "visit the field of Asfeld and you shall find the bones of your brother mingled with those of the vilest animals." In such a company, at such a time, words, as may be well supposed, soon passed to blows; and it was all that the venerable king could do to appease the tumult and save his guests from the hands of his infuriated warriors. Well had it been for him and his house had Alboin never returned alive from that venturesome visit.

Alboin and Rosamund may quite possibly have seen

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

each other for the first time then; certainly he must then have heard men speak of her matchless beauty. Either the sight of it or the story of it made so deep an impression upon his heart that, when he ascended the Lombard throne, he determined that she and none other should be his queen. So great was his passion that he recked nothing of the blood feud between his family and hers, nor yet of his own betrothal to a princess of the Franks, granddaughter of Clovis. He had no sooner been proclaimed king than he sent to demand the hand of Rosamund, and not unnaturally the demand was contemptuously refused by Cunimund, her father, who, now that Turisund was dead, was King of the Gepidæ. But Alboin was not one to be turned easily from his purpose. And at this time there seems little doubt that Rosamund herself, taken by the fame of his prowess and the splendour of his bearing, was by no means hostile to his suit—though her love, if ever she felt it, was to turn to such bitter hate. If this were so, the stratagem by which he became possessed of her for the time was very likely planned between them. While she and her ladies, attended by a small escort, passed from one place to another of her father's dominions, they were swooped down upon by a band of Lombards and the ladies captured. But Alboin was not yet strong enough to keep his prize. Cunimund appealed to Rome, and while the memory of Belisarius was still fresh, and while Narses still lived, the majesty of the Roman name might well overawe the Barbarian. Alboin, threatened by an allied army of Romans and Gepidæ, gave way, and fair Rosamund was restored to her father.

But the Lombard still clave to his determination. And now it came about that the fate of Europe was to be involved in the fates of this headstrong man and

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

this fair woman. For Alboin, to gain the end upon which he had set his heart, entered into an alliance with the Turanian people of the Avars (kinsmen and successors of the Huns), who stretched away indefinitely to north and east from the shores of the Euxine, that together they might crush Rosamund's ill-fated people. The Gepidæ appealed once more to Rome, but with inconceivable folly the Emperor refused to lift a finger in their aid, and calmly watched from Constantinople while they were eaten up by Lombards and Avars. Two results of wide and lasting importance followed from the annihilation of the Gepidæ; the Avar spread his empire over the rich lands of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, and maintained it for two centuries—a so much more deadly neighbour to Rome than any Teutonic tribe could ever have been, and a so much more deadly enemy of civilisation; while the Lombard, leaving these lands to his allies, cast his eyes upon those fair Italian plains which were for ever afterwards to bear his name. Another piece of infatuated folly on the part of the Roman Court made the path into Italy easy for Alboin. Narses was still in supreme command there, and, though now in extreme old age, was the one general who might have opposed the Lombards successfully. Just at this crisis his recall was sent out from Constantinople; and it was allowed to be sent by the Empress Sophia, couched in the most insulting terms: "Let the eunuch leave to men the exercise of arms, and return to his proper place and ply a distaff amongst the maidens of the palace." "I will spin her such a web as she shall not easily unravel," was Narses' indignant retort, and his revenge was to betray Italy to the Barbarian, thus once again and forever separating it from the Empire of the East.

But to go back to the more private history of the

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

lives of Alboin and Rosamund. At the fatal battle which crushed for ever the Gepid power, Cunimund, the king, with all the flower of his chivalry, had been slain; and his daughter was carried off by the victor of that bloody field. There was no obstacle now to their marriage; except that now, as one suspects, her love must have gone, and she must have shrunk from the embraces of him who was now not only the slayer of her uncle, but of her father too, and the destroyer of her country. Anyhow, with or without her consent, they were wed, and she followed her husband to the Italian campaign. So the days and the years went by, and Italy was won, and a daughter was born to them. Then there came a day when Alboin and all his nobles held high festival in his palace near Verona to celebrate his victories. Amongst the trophies which adorned this palace was one which must have thrilled Rosamund with hate and horror whenever she saw it. This was her lord's state drinking-cup, which had been fashioned—such was the savage custom of the Lombards—out of the skull of the greatest of the foemen whom he had overcome: the skull of Cunimund her father. And now, like another Belshazzar, inflamed with insolence and wine, Alboin commanded that the trophies of his victories should be brought forth, and especially this dread vessel, that the king and his princes might drink therein. After the cup had passed throughout the hall, and each warrior drained its contents with shouts of applause, "Fill it once more," said the King, "to the brim, and carry it to the Queen, and request her in my name to rejoice along with me, and with her father."

Rosamund suppressed all manifestation of the rage and shame which consumed her soul, and placing the goblet to her lips, drank, saying, "Let the will of my lord be obeyed." But as she drank she registered a vow

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

upon that terrible relic that the insult should be wiped out in the blood of her husband, and Alboin's doom was written then as surely as Belshazzar's. Amongst the Lombard warriors was one Helmichis, the king's armour-bearer. Whether it was now, in order to the accomplishment of her designs, that she first cast about him the fatal toils of her fascination, or whether he had already been admitted as her lover, is uncertain. Presently, however, we find him her devoted slave, and to him she entrusted the fulfilment of her vow. It was no consideration of honour which withheld him; but he knew too well the terrible might of Alboin, and declared to his mistress that alone he could not, and dare not, attempt the murder.

Rosamund's next step showed once more that

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned."

No sense of honour, no sense of shame seemed left to her. Amongst the nobles of the court there was none so brave as Peredeus, and none so strong, save Alboin himself. If he could be induced to join in the plot Helmichis declared himself ready to adventure it. But the plotters well knew that they must deal warily with Peredeus, for his loyalty to the King was above suspicion. Then fair Rosamund devised her devilish scheme to entrap the ill-fated man. He, as the Queen well knew, was the lover of one of her women, and it was no difficult matter for her to discover the lovers' tryst. The night after the Queen's plot was conceived these two were to meet. Rosamund found some excuse for sending her woman to a distance, and then, exchanging her royal robes for her handmaid's clothes, she, the Queen, kept the tryst in her place. So cleverly did she play her part, favoured by the darkness, by her disguise, and by the fact that she much resembled the

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

other in shape and size, that the unhappy man never found out the deception until the time for parting came, when she disclosed to his horrified ears that he had embraced the Lombard Queen. Nothing, as he well knew, but the most appalling tortures and death awaited him should the unwitting insult he had done to Alboin ever become known; and Rosamund swore that it should be made known to the King before morning if he refused to do her bidding. A choice like that which Candaules' Queen set before Gyges, in the old Lydian story, Rosamund now set before Peredeus. He, like Gyges, preferred dishonour to death, and consented to take part in the murder. The next night Rosamund exerted all her fatal charms upon her lord, and, after holding high festival again in the hall, he withdrew to her chamber. There, Delilah-like, she lulled him to sleep, withdrew his arms, and then opened the door of an ante-room where his murderers were already concealed. The two, Helmichis and Peredeus, rushed upon him, but their hands were perhaps unsteadied by shame and fear; anyhow, the first blow was not fatal, and, stupefied as he was with wine and sleep, the wounded giant sprang from the couch, and for a time defended himself with a chair, the only weapon within reach. His prowess only served to heighten Rosamund's revenge; she stood by and hissed out at him taunt and gibe as the murderers pressed him ever more closely, until at last the fatal thrust was made, and Cunimund and the people of the Gepidæ were revenged.

By Rosamund's order the palace had been cleared of guests and the doors closed, in order that the King's rest might not be disturbed. She had taken care to secure him an unbroken rest now with a vengeance; he slept such a sleep as the shout of battle or carouse should never wake him from. And the murderers passed out

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

of the chamber of death into the palace of silence to take what steps they might to secure their own safety.

Such of the Gepid warriors as had survived the carnage of the fatal day which put an end to their nation had taken service under the Lombard, and had followed Alboin through all his Italian campaigns; they still formed a compact and powerful band, however much reduced in number, and they were, of course, devoted body and soul to the Queen. They were now quartered in Verona, and the Queen contrived to have them speedily and secretly introduced into the courtyard of the palace. Then she felt herself strong enough to let the news go forth through Verona that the King had been slain. The consternation she counted upon followed. No one knew how widespread the conspiracy might be, and each man suspected his neighbour; so much so that the leading nobles made haste to gather their followers about them and get them away from Verona. For the moment it seemed as if the Queen's scheme might prosper to the end—her ambitious scheme, which was nothing else than this: to raise one of her accomplices to the Lombard throne and to reign along with him, Queen and King of Italy.

But it was not to be. Very soon the Lombard chiefs drew together again, and the three guilty conspirators became aware that their only chance of safety was in flight. Their City of Refuge must, of course, be Ravenna; for Ravenna was still held for the Emperor, and there the Exarch had his court. But it was no easy matter to travel from Verona to Ravenna, through a country which now began to resound with the Lombard cry for vengeance on the murderers of the nation's hero and king. The trusty Gepidæ, however, still held the palace and the approaches to it, and they managed also to get possession of some boats on the

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

river, which, under cover of darkness, one night they loaded with the spoil of the palace; the Queen, with her little daughter and her two accomplices, got on board, and, after an adventurous voyage down the Adige, they managed to reach the coast in safety, where they were fortunate, or unfortunate enough to find a Greek vessel, which carried them to the harbour of Ravenna. There it was that the last act of this terrible tragedy was destined to be played, when those who slew the slayer must themselves in turn be slain.

Longinus was the name of the feeble Roman exarch who had been sent out to supersede Narses, and who had proved his feebleness in losing Italy. Moved now by his hatred of the Lombard, and as much perhaps by the fame of the Queen's beauty and of the treasure which was carried on her ship, he ordered that the fugitives should be received with all honour. But very soon, he, too, came under the spell of Rosamund's fascination. As her revenge was sated now, and her ambition had much more to hope for in an alliance with a great Roman viceroy than with either of her Lombard lovers, she calmly determined to sacrifice them and give herself to Longinus. Helmichis' turn came first. One day, as he stepped from the bath, the Queen presented him with a cup of poisoned wine; but he had not drunk more than half the contents when its taste and its too speedy action convinced him of the treachery that was being practised on him. He had strength left to snatch a dagger, and holding it to the breast of the wretched Queen, he compelled her to finish the draught. There on the chamber floor, some hours afterwards, the bodies of the guilty pair were found, stark and cold, telling their own tale with an all too ghastly simplicity. To Peredeus, the only actor in this drama for whom we can feel the smallest sympathy or pity,

FAIR ROSAMUND THE FIRST

was meted out the most miserable lot of all. Longinus, inspired by the stronger will of Rosamund, would probably have attempted to seize for himself what of Italy still remained to the Empire; but now he hastened to allay any suspicions that might have been aroused at Constantinople by shipping thither the Lombard treasure, and with it the so miserably orphaned princess and the hapless Peredeus. The little princess was taken to the Imperial Court. Peredeus was blinded, and then set to make sport for the populace by displaying his vast strength in the Hippodrome—another Samson Agonistes. So the empty-headed Byzantine mob consoled itself for the loss of Italy by triumphing over the fallen fortunes of one of the mightiest of the Lombards who had won it.

Such, told in bald outline, is a story of "old, unhappy, far-off things, and *murders* long ago," which for intensity of horror is worthy to rank with the tragedy of the house of Atreus.

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL AND ITS GHOST STORY

THE night of the 22nd of October 1642 was an exciting one for the little town of Keinton, as it was then spelt, or Kinton, as it now is, on the borders of the counties of Warwick and Northampton, and was prelude to a still more exciting day. For the vanguard of the Parliament's army passed through Keinton that night, and pitched in the Vale of the Red Horse; while from the opposing brow of Edge Hill Rupert saw their watch-fires gleaming, and sent off instant word to the King to bring up the main body of the Royalists.

The dawn of the day—a Sunday—of the first fight in the Great Civil War saw the King strongly posted on the heights, while regiment after regiment of Essex's force was pouring through Keinton and forming up in front of it; though a large part of his artillery was still toiling on under Hampden, nearly a day's march in the rear; and of this body only Hampden's own picked men, with five guns, got up in time to take any part in the day's business.

It was while the two armies stood facing each other that, according to a story preserved by Horace Walpole, a troop of country squires, with their hounds in full cry, passed between them, caring neither for King nor Parliament, nor for the great issues which might hang on the event of that day: nor yet for the church bells which one must suppose rang for service that morning as on other Sundays.

A little after noon the battle began, and it consisted

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL

for the most part in confused charges of horse. Rupert's horse now, as so often afterwards, carried all before it; and now, as so often afterwards, his hopeless lack of generalship more than counter-balanced his dash as leader of a cavalry charge.

The Keinton villagers, who stood to view, saw the Parliament horse break before that furious onset and come flying in wild confusion across the open fields towards the town, in spite of all the gallant efforts of their leaders to stay the rout.

In the town, however, the pursuit was stayed; for there, in the street, the Parliament's baggage-waggons lay, and the temptation they presented was too strong for Rupert's men to resist, who spent the most critical hour of the day in shameful pillaging. It was of no avail that Rupert, when at last he got back, to find the King's whole force in confusion and himself in danger, could assure Charles that he could give a good account of the enemy's horse—"Ay, and of their carts too," as one of his cavaliers added.

The day, if not lost, was at least past winning. Either side at one moment or another had thought itself defeated, and both sides claimed the victory. The King withdrew from the field and camped for the night—a night of biting frost—on the Wormleighton Hills. Essex also withdrew his main body to quarters in Keinton, but left a detachment on the field; and this gave him a technical claim, at all events, to be accounted the victor.

Incidents of some human and still living interest stand out amongst the confused accounts of the battle. Lord Lindsey's prayer, at least, at the moment of the advance is worth remembering: "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee do not Thou forget me. March on, boys." One contrasts this prayer with that impious-sounding one of the French

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL

Captain la Hire on a similar occasion during the French and English wars just two centuries earlier: "Sir God, I pray you to do for la Hire what la Hire would do for you, were you captain at arms, and he God."

Memorable, too, are Lindsey's words to his captors (for captured he was that day, and died on his way to Warwick Castle): "You have done your work and may go to play now, unless you choose to fall out among yourselves."

Then there is the adventure of a certain Captain Smith. Sir Edmund Verney, the standard-bearer, had fallen; the royal standard was captured, and committed by Lord Essex to the charge of his secretary. When Captain Smith saw this he tore the orange scarf from the body of a slain Parliamentarian, and binding it round himself, rode boldly in amongst the ranks of the enemy, and coming up to the secretary—all unrecognised—persuaded him that such a trophy was too precious to be the charge of a mere penman, and so wrought upon the poor man that he delivered over the standard to the disguised cavalier, who promptly galloped back with it to the King, and reached him in safety, and under its shadow was knighted that very evening.

Another man of peace besides the unhappy secretary was on the field that day—no less a man than Dr Harvey, the philosopher and discoverer of the circulation of the blood. He was left in charge of the Royal Princes, Charles and James, but he became so absorbed in the study of a book he had with him that, like an earlier and greater Dominie Sampson, he was oblivious of his charge, of the battle, and all else, until a bullet grazed him, and this rude awakening warned him to seek a securer retreat for himself and the princes.

So much for the battle, and now to our ghost-story.

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL

The weeks went by, and Keinton had begun to settle down again into the dull routine of country life; though the terrors of that day, as one may suppose, still furnished a fruitful topic of conversation to the gossips in the village ale-house: until Christmas Day came round, when the little town was roused to a pitch of excitement, beside which the excitement of the battle itself must have seemed commonplace.

It appears that certain shepherds had been watching their flocks in the fields, not far from Keinton, until after midnight, when a vision was vouchsafed to them, as to their fellows in the fields by Bethlehem, on that same night so many centuries before.

But this was no vision of an angelic choir chanting its "*Gloria in excelsis et in terra pax.*" Far otherwise, for first upon the astonished ears of them burst the blare of trumpets and the tramp of an advancing host. And then, or ever they could fly, they were overtaken by a phantom army, and before it in the night wind the royal standard waved. And then, wonder upon wonder, another army came forth from Keinton, and presently the two hosts joined in the shock of battle.

The shepherds heard again the hideous din of that October day, the beating of the drums, the rattle of the musketry, the roar of the cannon, the neighing of the horses, the shouts of men, and the groans of the dying. Now one host seemed to have the advantage and now the other, and the battle swayed hither and thither—across the vale towards Keinton and then back upon Edge Hill—till at last the royal host seemed to be worsted; and, wailing, fled and vanished. And into thin air the conquerors melted too.

More dead than alive with fear and fatigue, for they had watched this strange scene for three hours, the shepherds got them as best they could to Keinton, and

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL

forthwith knocked up Mr William Wood, "justice for the peace in the county of Northampton," and Mr Samuel Marshall, "preacher of God's Word in Keinton," to whom we may well suppose their words seemed as the idle words of men drunk or mad. However, the men's story moved Mr Wood and Mr Marshall and divers others to go forth the next night, being Christmas night, to keep watch in the same place where the shepherds had had this strange vision.

And sure enough that night again the phantom battle raged.

"And so," says the contemporary account of this wonder, "departed the gentlemen and all the spectators much terrified with these visions of horror, and withdrew themselves to their houses, beseeching God to defend them from these hellish and prodigious armies."

The next night's peace was undisturbed, and men began to hope that the armies of ghosts were laid. But on the following Saturday and Sunday nights there were repetitions of the prodigy; and so on, week after week, on these nights, the same thing happened. At last the fame of the marvel, bruited about through all the country-side, reached the ears of the King, who lay then at Oxford. Charles forthwith despatched Colonel Lewis Kirke, Captain Dudley, Captain Wainman, and "three other gentlemen of credit" to visit Keinton and to investigate and report on the matter.

Nothing happened on the night of their arrival, nor until the next Saturday, when sure enough the King's commissioners saw the same sight that had terrified the country-side; and not only so, but as the phantom armies swept by them they recognised the faces of many friends and foes who had fallen in the day of battle. There was Sir Edmund Verney, now the ghostly guardian of a ghostly standard, and there were the Lords Stewart and

THE BATTLE OF EDGE HILL

Aubigny of the King's party; and the Lord St John, and brave young Charles Essex of the Parliament's, and many another; of all which things upon their return to the King they made testimony upon oath.

The contemporary account which begins quaintly enough for laughter with a dissertation on the power of "the Divell to condense the ayre into any shape he pleaseth, as he is a subtill spirit, thin and open, and can rancke himself into any forme or likenesse, as all the famousest divines of the primitive church, and none better than our late sovereigne, King James, of ever-living memory, in his treatise de Demonologia hath sufficiently proved," ends pathetically enough for tears with a prayer.

"What this prodigy doth portend, God only knoweth, and time, perhaps, will discover; but, doubtlessly, it is a signe of His wrath against this Land for these Civill Wars, which He in His good time finish, and send a sudden peace between his Majestie and Parliament."

Such is the story; and for the solution of it one can only say—as Lord Nugent says, who gives the story in his life of Hampden—that must be left to the ingenuity of the reader.

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

THE dawn of history discloses Europe peopled by various branches of the great Aryan race; and from then, up to the beginning of the Christian era, the story of the map of Europe, as far as there are materials for telling any story, is little else than the story of the expansion of the dominion of one of these Aryan peoples over its neighbours to the East and West.

Of the coming of the Aryans, and of their original settlements, it is not for the geographer nor yet for the historian to tell; that story can, as yet, only be told in halting and uncertain accents by the philologist, the antiquarian, and the ethnologist, from such hints as they may be able to pick up in their several studies. The earliest glimpse, then, that we have of the map, shows us the Eastern and Central Peninsulas of Southern Europe peopled by the Greek-Italian branch of the Aryans; the Western Peninsula and the West generally, along with the Northern Islands, by the Celtic branch; while in Central Europe, the Teutonic division of the race presses upon the Celtic to the West, and is in turn pressed by the Slavonic division on the East and North. The aboriginal non-Aryan population, where it was not exterminated, was thrust back into the extreme North, or assimilated by the conquering Aryans. Geographically, at all events, except for such remnants as the Basques and Finns, this earlier population has vanished. From this beginning, the geographical interest of Europe centres in Italy. Geographically, the influence even of Greece has been slight, compared with that of Rome.

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

It is true that Greece exercised a great negative influence upon the map, by barring the road into Europe against the Persian; but any actual Greek conquest of territory on a large scale was in the direction of Asia and not of Europe, and had nothing of the permanency of Roman conquest. Indeed, we may say that first and last Rome, by the growth of her Empire, and then through its disruption, has been the one great factor in the making of the map of Europe. The simplicity of the map at the beginning of the Christian era was effected by the expansion of the Roman dominion, and the complexity of the map in mediæval and modern times is the result of the break up of the Roman empire. That simplicity was such that there was then really only one dividing line on the map—that which separated the countries under the rule of Rome from all the lands which lay beyond her boundary. Beginning from the north-west, this dividing line followed the course of the Rhine as far up as Coblenz or Mainz, then crossed to the Danube, striking it somewhere near Ratisbon, and then ran along the valley of the Danube to the Euxine. South of this dividing line lay the dominions of Rome—north of it lay the European lands outside her sway. Over these lands wandered innumerable semi-civilised tribes of Teutons and Slavs, and behind them again countless savage hordes of the Turanian race—Huns, Avars, and Magyars, Finns, and Laps; remnants, some of them, of the aboriginal population; others of them fresh immigrants from Asia. Of course, it is in a great measure due to our ignorance that we lump all these peoples, nations, and languages together without attempting to define their boundaries; but these boundaries were so utterly vague, and so constantly changing, as to defy description. All your map can do is to mark the position of those nations whose confines from time to time marched

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

with those of Rome, and with whom she came into intercourse or conflict. When we turn our attention south of the dividing line of our map, we find that we must not only think of the European mainland, but also of the great Mediterranean Sea, which bounds the Continent on the south, and all the islands lying in it; and not only so, but our thought must take in, too, all the northern fringe of Africa, the whole of Egypt and Syria, and the great promontory of Asia Minor—all this territory fell within the limits of the Roman empire, and must be included in the map of Europe in these early times. In the course of the first century, the dividing line of the map must be extended in the north-westerly direction beyond the mouth of the Rhine, so as to include England and Wales—leaving out Scotland and Ireland, which never fell under the dominion of Rome—and in the easterly direction it would have to be carried through the Euxine, and sometime in the second century as far east as the Caspian. Speaking broadly, the map of Europe remained unchanged during the first four centuries of our era. Of course, I do not mean that there was never any alteration in the boundary line—sometimes it would be pushed forward, so as to include a whole province such as Dacia, beyond the Danube—corresponding more or less with modern Roumania, which still preserves in its name the memory of this old Roman conquest, and then would be thrust back again by the pressure of the barbarians. And in the far east the boundary line was never unalterably fixed; it varied with the varying fortunes of the Roman and Persian, or Parthian, arms.

But, roughly, the confines of the Empire, and consequently the divisions of the map, remained such as we have seen them. Throughout the whole of this vast region of the Roman world ran splendid roads, along

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

which were established a most elaborate system of post-houses, and connecting which, where they might be sundered by seas or straits, was a very complete service of ferry-boats; so that I very much doubt whether, in spite of all our vaunted improvements in the art of travel, a tour through Europe is so easy a matter now as it was then—Europe, that is to say, south of our dividing line. Imagine a journey undertaken from the north-west to the south-east extremity of the Empire in those days of its greatness—say, from the Wall of Antonine, in the north of Britain, to Jerusalem. We should, of course, do the journey more quickly now; but in the course of it we should have to pass the frontiers of many different nations, undergoing all the inconveniences of custom-house inspection, and of changes of language and coin; moreover, the difficulties of land travel in Asiatic Turkey would certainly impel us to make the latter part, at least, of such a journey by sea. Whereas in the second century it could have been done in its entire length without ever stepping off a Roman high-road, except for a few hours into a government ferry-boat, and done, I believe, with greater safety than a journey from York to London two centuries ago. These would have been the principal stages of such a journey, and their distances, as given by Gibbon:—to York 200 miles, York to London 210, London to Sandwich 62, Sandwich to Boulogne 42, Boulogne to Rheims 160, Rheims to Lyons 310, Lyons to Milan 305, Milan to Rome 390, Rome to Brindisi 330, Brindisi to Durazzo (Dyrrachium) 36, Durazzo to Constantinople (Byzantium) 650, Constantinople to Ancyra 260, Ancyra to Tarsus 275, Tarsus to Antioch 130, Antioch to Tyre 230, Tyre to Jerusalem 154—3744 miles in all. Along the whole of this route, services of posts were established; post-houses were erected every six miles, and every post-house was provided with forty

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

horses. The posts were instituted indeed only for government service; but they were occasionally used in cases of urgency by private individuals, and when the government postal service was used, very rapid progress might be made. Thus, in the reign of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, posts from Antioch to Constantinople, and does the whole distance, 665 miles, at the rate of about 130 miles a day; at the same rate he would have accomplished the journey from the Scottish border to Jerusalem in a month.

But the mention of Theodosius reminds us that our next look at the map should be taken at the date of his death, 395, for then another permanent division enters into it. No longer is it sufficient to mark off the Roman Empire from the lands beyond it; but now another dividing line must be run through the Empire itself, marking off from each other the Eastern and Western portions, which, henceforth, are separate Empires, each with its own emperor and its distinct government. It is true that there had been earlier divisions than this one; Diocletian, just a century earlier, had divided the Empire into four great prefectures, and attempted to found a system of partnership amongst four emperors; but in theory the Empire was still one, with its central government, and, after Diocletian's death, the whole scheme collapsed. Early in the fourth century, Constantine, who did so much to pave the way for future division by the foundation of a rival capital, was sole emperor; there was temporary division again under his sons, but Constantius reigned alone in 353. Again there was division at the accession of Valentinian I. (364); but Theodosius is sole emperor in 394. But the next year the partition which had thus, so to speak, been in the air for a century, took shape finally. It is still a very simple division that we have to make; for, the northern boundary remaining

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

as it was, if we draw a line due south from the junction of the Danube with the Drave right away into the heart of Africa, we shall mark, fairly accurately, the division between the sons of Theodosius—all to the east of that line was the Empire of Arcadius, all to the west that of Honorius. That is to say, the western Roman Empire embraced, in the phraseology of modern Europe, all of Italy, Spain, and Portugal, France and Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, England, such parts of the Austrian Empire as are south and west of the Danube, and such parts of the German Empire as are west of the Rhine; while the Eastern Empire embraced the whole of modern Servia, Bulgaria, Roumelia, Turkey in Europe, and Greece, together with the vast promontory of Asia Minor and Syria; the boundary to the east being subject to constant variation, as in the case of the undivided Empire. Our line divides the Mediterranean about equally between the two Empires, all the Greek islands falling to the East; all the Italian and Spanish islands to the West; in Africa, Mauretania and Tripolis are parts of the Western Empire; Libya and Egypt of the Eastern; the boundary to the south, like that to the east, being very indefinite. Such was the map at the beginning of the fifth century; more complicated divisions must, however, be introduced almost immediately, for the Western Empire began to fall to pieces as soon as Theodosius died. But, henceforth, East and West went on their diverse ways, never again to be united, except for a moment under Justinian. For the West, the whole of the fifth century is one of turmoil, invasion, and loss. During the preceding centuries, indeed, the terror of barbarian invasion had lain heavily on the heart of many a Roman emperor. Over and over again the boundary line had been broken through; but, after a time, at whatever cost, and with whatever difficulty, it had been restored, and such barbarians as had

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

established themselves on the southern side of the line had been incorporated amongst the Roman subjects. But in the fifth century all this is changed; the flood of barbaric invasion rushes over the frontiers of the Empire, never again to be forced back; Teutonic tribes of Goths and Vandals, Burgundians and Franks press in, one after the other; and, most terrible of all, because a non-Aryan race, but of little importance geographically, because effecting no permanent settlement—the Hun. But such was the magic of the Roman name that, for the greater part of the century, conquering barbarians delighted to fancy themselves, and to call themselves, Roman generals; and a phantom Empire still existed until the deposition of Romulus Augustus, or Augustulus (what concentrated satire in his name), by Odoacer, in 476. It is not, however, until quite the end of the century, in the time of the great Theodoric, that anything like definite or permanent new divisions begin to emerge from the flood. Then we find a great kingdom of the East Goths established in Italy, embracing all that we now mean by that name, except the island of Sardinia; and running north and east, as far as to what we saw just now, were the bounds of the Western Empire. Balancing this, to the west was the kingdom of the West Goths, embracing nearly all Spain, and running up into France as far as the Loire. While all the north of France (except Brittany), with the territory up to the Rhine, formed the third great kingdom—that of the Franks. Wedged in amongst these three, and bordering upon them all, was the kingdom of the Burgundians (the first of the many and various Burgundies which were to be), including Switzerland and extensive territories on either side of the Rhone, but not reaching quite to the sea on the south; besides these, there was a small kingdom of the Sueves in the north-west corner of Spain, another Teutonic people, whose

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

name remains in a very different part of the map; and in the north-west corner of France, there was the Celtic kingdom of Armorica, really part of Britain, though now for Britain itself the Celtic Briton was fighting with the Teutonic Englishman. One more great kingdom must be mentioned—that of the Vandals; driven slowly through Spain by the Goth, the Vandal had, early in the century, crossed over into Africa at the invitation, in the first instance, of the unhappy Boniface, Count of Africa, to avenge the wrongs he had suffered—or supposed himself to have suffered—at the hands of the Imperial Court. Boniface found, to his consternation, that he had called up a devil whom he could not lay. By the middle of the century, all of Africa which had belonged to the Western Empire, together with Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic Islands, had fallen to the Vandal, and, in the time of Theodoric, formed the Vandal kingdom which was so soon to disappear again. One step in the course of the Vandal invasion of Africa is memorable for all time; it was in the third month of the siege of Hippo that its great bishop, “the light and pillar of the Catholic Church, was gently released by death from the actual and impending calamities of his country.”

Meanwhile, the Eastern Empire, as far as its geography is concerned, had suffered but little change. Barbarian hosts had swept across it; the Hun had even penetrated to the gates of Constantinople itself; but no permanent kingdom was established within its borders. The dominion of the emperors of the East was still of vast extent, “bounded,” as Gibbon says, “by the Adriatic and the Tigris, and comprehending within its limits the whole interval of twenty-five days’ navigation, which separated the extreme cold of Scythia from the torrid zone of Ethiopia.” We have followed the stages of a land

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

journey from one extremity of the undivided Empire to the other; now let us glance at the stages of a water journey from the extreme north to the extreme south of the Empire of the East—from the Crimea to Assouan.

From Cherson (Sebastopol) to Constantinople would be some 400 miles, and with a fair wind would take a Roman ship about four days; from Constantinople to Rhodes, between 600 and 700 miles, taking about a week; from Rhodes to Alexandria was considered a four days' sail in good weather—400 miles; and ten days were allowed for the navigation of the Nile from Alexandria to the first Cataract, a distance of over 800 miles. But the north wind must have blown with much greater persistency in Egypt then than it does now, if the time allowed for this part of the journey was really the usual time taken in doing it.

Such was the map of Europe at the beginning of the sixth century. That century saw many and various changes pass over its face; the most striking in the eyes of the men of the time must have been the extension of the borders of the Eastern Empire, at the expense of Vandal and Goth, over all Italy and Africa, and part of Spain—in fact, for the time, the Mediterranean was again a Roman lake; but this course of Roman re-conquest depended upon the military genius of two men—Belisarius and Narses—and receded again, after their disappearance from the scene, as rapidly as it had advanced. Far more important in its lasting effect upon the map was the steady growth of the Frankish power, which during this century swallowed up the Burgundian kingdom and the East Gothic land north of the Alps. Between Frank and Roman the East Gothic kingdom disappeared altogether, like that of the Vandal. The West Goth was driven back to the Pyrenees, while to the east the Frankish Empire

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

extended itself to the Elbe, triumphing over its heathen and barbarous neighbours; though at the mouth of the Elbe the Saxon still maintained his independence. But it is very difficult to fix any date for a steady survey of the map of Europe, either in this century or in the two following, so shifting are the dividing lines. Two or three new peoples, however, have to be noticed in this (the sixth) century, as makers of some definite and more or less lasting impression upon the map. The Lombards and Avars—the first a Teutonic, the latter a Turanian people—after devouring between them the neighbouring people of the Gepidæ (a Gothic tribe), turned their attention upon the Roman Empire about the year 570. The Lombards poured into Italy, and became practically masters of the Italian mainland for two centuries; while the Avars spread themselves, as Gibbon says, “over the fair countries of Walachia, Moldavia, Transylvania, and the parts of Hungary beyond the Danube, and established the Dacian Empire of the Chagans (so their king was called), which subsisted with splendour above 230 years.” This seems somewhat too long a term of florescence to assign to the Avar Empire, yet it certainly did exist for many generations, though even so the lasting interest of the Avar, as far as the map of Europe is concerned, is that he was the earliest forerunner, to make any definite mark upon it at all, of his terrible kinsman the Turk, whose mark is so vividly set upon it to this day; for, of the other forerunners of the Turk, the earlier Hun, as we have seen, made no permanent impression; while the Bulgarians, originally a Turanian people like Hun, Avar, and Turk, and whose inroads into southern Europe were about contemporaneous with those of the Avar, became so thoroughly intermixed with the Slav, and so completely impregnated with his spirit,

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

that the kingdom which they established between the Danube and the Balkans about the end of the sixth century, and with which the Eastern Empire warred with varying fortunes for so long, must be looked upon as a Slavonic, not Turanian, element in Europe. It was during this and the next century that the Slavonic element became the predominating one, as it has ever since continued to be throughout the Balkan Peninsula, as far, at least, as race is concerned. Various tribes of the great Slav race, pressed out from that seething turmoil of peoples in the unknown regions of North-Eastern Europe, forced their way between Frank and Avar right down to the South of Greece. They formed, indeed, at the time no definite kingdom; they were sometimes tributaries to the Eastern Empire, sometimes at war with it; but whether at peace or at war, whether conquering or conquered, they made their racial influence felt everywhere throughout South-Eastern Europe. It is a hotly disputed question to this day how far the modern Greek of the mainland is Slav by race. Yet one other race must be mentioned. The Saracens, welded into a tremendous power by the inspiration of the Mohammedan faith in the seventh century, began to press in the eastern border of the Empire more vigorously, and with more lasting effect than ever the Persian had done. During that century and the next they overran the whole of North Africa, separating it for ever from the Empire; indeed, from those days until our own, Africa disappears from European geography; they overflowed into Spain, drove back the West Goth into the extreme north-west corner of the Peninsula; pressed into the heart of France, until at last their career of conquest was checked by Charles Martel at Tours in 732.

But it is not until the beginning of the ninth century that we arrive at any pause in this ebb and

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

flow of races and peoples wherein we may take a steady survey of the map. Not indeed that this pause was of any long duration, but for a time the genius of Charles the Great stays the incessant movements of the last three centuries, and restores a simplicity to the divisions of Europe, of all Southern and Western Europe at least, which makes some sort of approach to their simplicity in the first century—a simplicity destined, however, to be a fresh starting-point for new complexities, the development of which has constituted the geographical history of Europe for the last 1000 years. For by the beginning of the ninth century the Frank had so plainly demonstrated his superiority to the other Teutonic peoples that the Frankish king could assume something of the position held by the Roman emperor in old days; the Burgundian power had been absorbed by the Frank, and the devouring Lombard had in turn been devoured by him; the Saxon, as far as the continent of Europe is concerned, had shared the same fate; the Avar had been crushed, and the advance of the Slav to the West had been stayed.

On Christmas Day, 800, Charles received the Imperial crown at the hands of the pope, and the Empire of the West, which had been in abeyance since the deposition of Romulus Augustus, was revived in a new form. This is the picture in broad outline which the map of Europe presents in the height of Charles's power. There are the three great civilised Empires: first, the Western Roman, which includes (to use again the phraseology of modern Europe) the whole of France, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland, Germany up to the Oder, Austria, with Bohemia and Hungary up to the Danube, Northern and Central Italy, Corsica, and the Spanish March up to the Ebro. Secondly, the Eastern Roman Empire, including what is now Turkey in

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

Europe, Greece, with all the eastern fringe of the Adriatic, Southern Italy, and the islands of Sardinia and Sicily; while to the east it still extended over Asia Minor up to a line drawn from Trebizond to Tarsus. Thirdly, there was the Emirate of Cordova, separated now from the Caliphate of Bagdad, and embracing practically the whole Spanish Peninsula.

As we have seen, the Slav swarmed in Greece and Macedonia, and owned but very doubtful allegiance to the Eastern Emperor, while higher up he occupied much debatable land between the Empires of the East and West, where his independent kingdom of Servia was soon to be. We have assigned Southern Italy to the East, but the Emperor's writ would not have run far inland, for the old Lombard Duchy of Beneventum still existed in semi-independence, disposed to look for its over-lord, if anywhere, rather at Aachen than at Constantinople. Cooped up into the extreme north-west corner of Spain a remnant of the West Goths still held out against the Saracen, and was indeed even now beginning to recover something of the land lost to Christendom.

Beyond these borders the divisions of Europe are still too indefinite to be marked with any precision upon the map. Different branches of the northern division of the great Slav family, cut off from their brethren in the south, occupy the central plain of Europe, under a vast variety of strange-sounding names. North and east of them Turanian hordes still wander free; while north-west of them the northern Teutons are beginning to shape themselves into organised States in the peninsulas and islands which separate the Baltic from the Northern Ocean.

But it is with the break-up of Charles's empire that the lines were at last laid down upon which the after-

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

development of the European nationalities was to be carried out. After the great Emperor's death a process of division, reunion, and re-division went on for many years amongst his sons and descendants, somewhat analogous to that which had gone on in the old Empire under the sons and successors of Constantine. Of the many treaties of partition which were effected the most important was that signed at Verdun in 843, of which Sir F. Palgrave has said: "The history of modern Europe is an exposition of the Treaty of Verdun." But it is not until the next century that what was to be the final outcome of this treaty and its various confirmations or modifications was really discernible. The century which passed between the time of Charles the Great and Otto the Great, and which saw the break-up and reconstruction of the Empire of the West, was perhaps the most disastrous which Europe has ever passed through. The Northmen were not only founding Scandinavian kingdoms, but were sending out swarms of savage pirates, who were the scourge and terror of the whole coast and every navigable river of Western Europe. From the East came a scourge even more terrible, in the shape of the Turanian Magyar, kinsman of the Hun and Avar of earlier times, and of the Turks of later; while the Saracen, checked in Spain, amply avenged himself at the expense of the Empire of the East by completely conquering the great islands of Sardinia and Sicily, and harrying all the southern coast of Italy. But by the end of the tenth century these disruptive processes, in the West at least, were drawing to a close, and reconstructive processes had well set in. By that time one may say that every modern European nationality (except the Turkish, if that has any right to be so called) had been planted in European soil; and the after-story of Europe is the story of the persistent

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

growth and development, however slow it may, in many cases, have been, of germs which had already taken root by the year 1000. In the case of all the countries of Europe whose shores are washed by its western seas from the Arctic to the Mediterranean, the story of this development has in its broad outlines been a simple and steady one.

By this time the three great Scandinavian kingdoms, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were well established, and more or less Christianised and civilised; and though the Norman was to provide rulers for many other lands he was not destined to convert any other territory into a Scandinavian kingdom.

By this time it was evident that the English kingdoms were to be consolidated into one, and that the English rule must spread over the British Islands; and though England might be conquered by Dane or Norman, yet England could never become a dependency of Denmark or Normandy, but that in England, Dane and Norman alike must become Englishmen.

By this time, also, it was evident that France and Germany were to be two; that, though the Frank had left his name for ever on France, it was not to be the German element, but the older Latinised Gallic element which was to be the predominating one in her history. When, in 987, a count of Paris took the title of king, modern France began her career. And though at the moment Hugh Capet's territory was by no means the greatest in what we know as France; though he was overshadowed by his powerful neighbour, the Duke of Normandy; yet from that time and from that centre the kingdom of France, however slowly, and with whatever checks, went on extending its sway, and feeling for its boundaries to the sea, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine. And in Spain by this time the petty

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

Christian kingdoms of the north were fairly launched on their course of reconquest, a course to be completed four centuries later by the final expulsion of the Moor, and the union of the Christian powers under Ferdinand and Isabella.

When, however, we pass to Central Europe, the story of the development of the modern nationalities is no such steady and unbroken one. Nevertheless, here, too, we have a new beginning marked towards the end of the tenth century. When Otto the Great reconstituted the empire of the West as the "Holy Roman Empire," and was crowned Emperor in 962, "Germany may be said to have taken definitely the place which it was to hold in modern Europe." But Germany was not destined to know any such process of unification as France and England; the shadow of empire which hung upon her was enough to hinder that. As yet the names of the two powers which were destined to be the rivals in controlling her later development are scarcely discernible geographically. Yet the Mark of Austria (not yet a duchy) has its place now upon the map, and the House of Hapsburg, though not yet associated with Austria, is already in existence. Long time, indeed, was yet to pass before the House of Hapsburg came to be the great provider of emperors, and by imperial grants, or fortunate matrimonial alliances, came to make Austria the leading power in Germany. Long time, too, was to pass before the rival House of Hohenzollern became associated with Brandenburg, still longer before Hohenzollern and Brandenburg were associated with Prussia. But the Hohenzollerns, too, in Otto's time are in existence, and Brandenburg and Prussia are names known to the map, though the latter as yet only applies to far-distant Slavonic lands on the Baltic—outside the Empire and still heathen.

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

It has been reserved for our own century to see the final extinction of the Holy Roman Empire, in whose history Austria had so long played the leading part; and our own century, too, has seen the construction of a new German Empire under the leadership of Prussia, from which Austria has altogether withdrawn, to form, along with the allied kingdom of Hungary, a strange empire of her own over many and much-mixed races—Magyars, Teutons, and Slavs.

It is from Otto's time that that great kingdom of Hungary dates the true beginning of its history. The terrible Magyar, tamed by him, speedily became settled, civilised, and Christianised, and was thus prepared to afford, as it has, the solitary instance of a non-Aryan immigrant race maintaining its non-Aryan characteristics, and yet assuming a lasting place, and playing an honourable part, amongst the modern peoples of Europe.

In Otto's time there was still a remnant, and an important one, left in the kingdom of Burgundy or Arles, of the great middle kingdom of Lotharingia between Eastern and Western Franks, which had been formed at the partition of Verdun; but it was destined for the most part to be absorbed in France, and is only represented on the modern map by Switzerland; though Belgium and the Netherlands may also be regarded as fragments of the original Lotharingia, whose name still lives in Lorraine. The unification of Italy was still more impeded than that of Germany by the idea of empire, for both East and West looked to her as the fount of Imperial authority, and either empire still called itself Roman, though one was now as distinctively German as the other was Greek. Italy was torn asunder; all the south was nominally part of the Eastern Empire, though, as we have seen, Sicily and Sardinia had been rent away by the Saracens, and the

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

allegiance of the duchy of Beneventum was of so doubtful a sort; while all the north, except Venice and Ravenna and a thin line of coast, was part of the Western Empire. Yet now, in the north at all events, the idea of a separate Italian kingdom, partially realised as it had been in the Lombard times, was revived; and when German emperors descended from the Alps to claim the allegiance of Italy and to receive the crown of empire at Rome, they had to submit to be crowned again at Milan with the iron crown of Lombardy, as being not only lords of the Empire but kings also of a distinct kingdom in Italy. And though Italy was to wait so many centuries, even to our own times, for the realisation of the idea, yet it was never wholly lost, and the hope of independence was never wholly extinguished from that day to this. It underlay all the many and various rules to which Italy has been subjected—the rule of the Norman in Sicily, and in the southern mainland—(who saved those lands from the Saracen and severed them from the Greek), of the Angevin and the Aragonese and the Bourbon; it has survived the papal rule in the centre; and in the north it has survived the Imperial rule, and the times of the Free Cities, and the despots, and the rival claims of France and Spain; and has at last been realised so strangely under the House of Savoy, a House just about to begin its career in Otto's days, but then, and for long after, rather as a Burgundian than Italian power.

Turning to the Eastern Empire itself, it might seem at first sight as if the condition of things shown by the map at the end of the tenth century had nothing in common with that shown by the map of to-day. For the Eastern Empire was still, in those days, of vast extent—greater, indeed, apparently, than it had been for many generations; for by this time the Bulgarian Empire,

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

so long a standing menace to Constantinople, had been not only Slavonicised, as we have already seen, but Christianised, and also humbled in the field by more than one vigorous Emperor of the East; indeed it was already, or very shortly afterwards, incorporated again in the Empire; as also, for the moment, was the neighbouring Slavonic kingdom of Servia. The Empire of the East, too, had outlived the terror of the Saracen, and its boundaries in the east had extended with the decline of the Saracenic power. Nevertheless the forces were at work which brought about its final fall; the tramp of the terrible Turk might already be heard on its far eastern confines, and the era of the Crusades was at hand. Innumerable changes took place, on the face of the map, in the Balkan peninsula during the long decline of the Empire; independent kingdoms and duchies rose and fell, some evidently paltry, some apparently very great, but all temporary. There was another great Servian empire, and another Bulgarian kingdom; there were manifold little Greek States, whether ruled by Greeks or by Crusaders from the West; there was the Latin conquest of Constantinople itself; nevertheless, underlying all these changes and underlying the great devastating flood of Turkish conquest, which swept them all away, the mixed Slavonic and Greek racial element remained at bottom the strongest and most persistent one throughout the peninsula, and it has been left for our own time to see Slavonic and Greek kingdoms and principalities emerging again as the Turkish flood recedes.

Looking finally to North-eastern Europe, peopled for the most part by the other great branch of the Slav race, we find at the end of the tenth century something of definite outline beginning to appear in that turmoil of wandering and contending tribes. Many of the

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

westernmost tribes had been or were to be incorporated in the Holy Roman Empire, or had become its tributaries, such as the Czechs of Bohemia, whose kingdom was to play such an important part in Imperial history. And now, amongst the tribes of the vast eastern plain the two, destined to be the protagonists of that part of the European stage, had each of them already begun its national life. Already in the ninth century a tribe of Lechs had changed their name for Poles, meaning in their own tongue the people of the plains—the great plains of the Vistula; and now at the end of the tenth century there is a Polish kingdom under a powerful king. Here its history begins—so full (as Dean Church says) of turbulence and incorrigible anarchy within, of aggression and tyrannous insolence without—and perhaps of all histories the most pathetic at its close.

And already in the ninth century some Slavonic and Finnish tribes, welded together under a band of Scandinavian leaders or conquerors, kinsmen of the Norman conquerors in the west and south, began to be known dimly to Greek and Latin writers as “the Russ.” By the end of the tenth century they had become a dreaded power; in their ships they found their way down the rivers of the north, through Mongol hordes of Patzinaks and Chazars, into the Euxine, and became a new, though passing, terror to the Empire by sea, as those hordes were an old and abiding one by land. Already that strange prophecy had arisen that in the last days the Russians should become masters of Constantinople. But the time of Russia’s abiding greatness was not yet; she had yet to be humiliated by the Pole on the west, and to feel the Tartar yoke from the east imposed upon her for centuries; it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that that yoke was finally broken and

THE MAKING OF THE MAP OF EUROPE

Russia freed to enter upon that forward path which, as we know so well, she treads to-day.

Such was the map of Europe, looking at it broadly, at the end of the first Christian millennium. There was a widespread feeling at the time that some great crisis was taking place; many deemed that the end of all things was at hand, and forsook their employments, renounced their properties, and thronged the monasteries. But it was not the agony of death upon which Europe had entered—rather was it the throes of birth, the birth of the modern nationalities. And we, as we look at the map of that time, feel that it is no longer the map of the old world, but, in spite of all the changes which have since passed upon it, that it is already the map of modern Europe.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

Being a Scene on a Byway of History

It is an idle amusement, perhaps, to speculate on the "might have beens" of History. Yet it sometimes happens that the opportunity of making History, or of stopping its manufacture, has been so narrowly missed that we cannot avoid giving so much rein to our imagination as to let it picture the greatness of the change in the after-course of things, had such and such a moment of Time gone otherwise. Is it not Pascal who says somewhere that if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the whole face of Europe would have been altered? And once and again there has arrived a quarter of a minute of time, which might have been no less momentous in its issues than was that quarter of an inch of flesh. The best known and the most critical of all these quarter minutes is perhaps that in which the younger Pompey turned a deaf ear to the suggestion of Menas.

If we have forgotten the scene as we read it long ago in our Roman history, we are familiar with it in our Shakspeare. The Triumvirs — Octavius, Anthony, Lepidus—are met on board Pompey's galley, and Menas whispers his suggestion :

"These three world-sharers, these competitors, are in thy vessel: let me cut the cable, and when we are put off, fall to their throats; all then is thine."

Regretfully Pompey declines:

"All this thou should'st have done, and not have spoke of it! In me, 'tis villany; in thee, it had been good service."

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

One's imagination is fairly staggered by the vastness of the issues which hung on the decision of that moment.

The deaths of Antony and Lepidus at that juncture might have had far-reaching effect enough; but had Octavius not lived to become Augustus, how completely different, as far as we can judge, would have been the whole after-course of the world's history.

The Roman Empire might never have taken shape at all; anyhow, its actual establishment was the work of Augustus; and, as Merivale has said, that was "the greatest political work that any human being ever wrought. The achievement of Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, or Napoleon is not to be compared with it for a moment." Until the suppression of the Western Empire, its history is the history of the world; and to try to imagine the course of mediæval European history without its dominating, however shadowy, idea of "the Holy Roman Empire," is like trying to imagine "Hamlet" with the prince's part left out.

But I never think of that moment in the life of Sextus Pompeius without calling to mind a very similar moment, long centuries afterwards, in the life of another man whom I conceive to have been not altogether unlike that wild sea-rover.

This one was a certain Gabrino Fondulo, a typical specimen of those Italian tyrants whose loves and lusts and hates and horrible atrocities form so large and gloomy a part of Italian history in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That this particular one, in acquiring the tyranny over Cremona, had murdered seventy members of a rival family in his castle of Mocastormo, gives him no title to pre-eminence in crime over his fellows. Amongst their crowd his name is lost to fame now. But had this man seized the opportunity which came to him once in his life—though, indeed, it was fraught with no

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

such vast issues as that which came to Pompey—his fame would at least have resounded through the world of his own day, and in the world of our day some faint echoes of this fame might still be reverberating.

For it chanced once to him to entertain together at Cremona the two great lights of Christendom—Pope and Emperor. The Emperor was Sigismund, the Pope John XXIII. Sigismund, despite the great figure which he cut, and the still greater figure which he imagined himself to cut, in his own time, is best known to us by that little incident in the Council of Constanx, from which he has won at Carlyle's hands—with that happy knack of his of affixing an epithet which clings for ever—the nickname of "Super-Grammaticam"—"Sigismund Super-Grammaticam"; it is so we know him now. "Right Reverend Fathers," ran one of his speeches to that august assembly—"date operam ut illa nefanda Schisma (the Bohemian heresy) eradicetur." "Domine," meekly interposes a cardinal, "'Schisma' est neutrius generis." "Ego sum Rex Romanus et super Grammaticam," says the magnificent Sigismund. Known also is he to us by that historic blush which all the Council saw pass over his face when John Huss, just being handed over by him to the executioners, turned and looked steadily at him, saying: "Freely came I hither under the safe-conduct of the Emperor."

At least he had the grace to blush, an effect which we may feel pretty sure that neither his host nor his fellow-guest at Cremona could have achieved; and, withal, he was one whom we pity quite as much as we blame; for, indeed, he was a man of good intention but weak will, thrust into a position which he could never worthily sustain, though, in his pompous, meddling vanity, he fancied himself to be very great indeed—great as Augustus himself or any of his real or shadowy

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

successors. That "super-grammaticam" gives us the very man.

But what single epithet shall adequately set forth the dark and sinuous character—so evil, so powerful—of the Vicar of Christ, the representative of God upon earth, Balthasar Cossa, Pope John XXIII. If he did not attain to the mystery of iniquity wrought by such Popes of the close of the century as Sixtus IV. or Alexander VI., yet John XXIII. was no mean adept in crime, even for an ecclesiastic. By his own admissions, before that same Council of Constanz, he had been guilty of licentiousness which almost passes belief; of the most atrocious cruelties, the most grinding tyranny, unglutted avarice, unblushing simony. There were yet other charges against him, over which the modern historian is fain to draw the veil of Latinity.

Against all these charges John's plea was that, at least, they were no heresies, and that the Pope could be judged for heresy alone. But the incident which always rises up before our mind's eye in connection with his name is one which happened at a council he held in Rome. At the opening mass, immediately after the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit, a huge owl flew out, screeching, and glaring at the Pope. "A strange shape for the Holy Ghost," whispered the worshippers. The assembly broke up for the day; but the next day the owl still sat there, glaring at the Pope; and it had to be driven out by the cardinals with sticks and stones. Though the story yield no characteristic epithet, yet it makes a highly symbolical picture in the life of a successor of St Peter, who might have read the charge to him and his fellow-apostles as though it ran: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and cruel as birds of prey."

Such were the three who met at Cremona some little time before the opening of the Council of Constanz in

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

1414; Fondulo, the host—Pope and Emperor his guests. Now, amongst the wonders of Cremona was its great tower, four hundred feet in height, and the view to be obtained therefrom; and up the tower, without any other escort, Fondulo conducted his illustrious visitors. Then it was, while the two were gazing out upon the panorama spread before them, that the thought flashed upon the mind of the third—why not pitch them both down headlong? So should he have ended, by one brave stroke, the matters in dispute which he had with either (and being lord of a Lombard town he probably had many), and so gained for himself an unique place in history; for surely it never chanced to mortal man, before or since, to have had it in his power to do to death at one blow a Pope and an Emperor. The moment passed without result—as did that other moment on Pompey's galley—and the three descended in safety to the ground. But some ten years afterwards, when Fondulo came to a bloody end, like so many of the tyrants of the time, and was executed at Milan, he confessed the thought which had been in his mind on his tower at Cremona, and declared that the only thing which he regretted in the whole course of his life was that he had missed taking advantage of that golden opportunity. Typical here again of his class, of the utter deadness of conscience which characterised it, the ghosts of the seventy of the Cavalcabò family, or of all the others whose deaths he must have brought about during his life as Condotiere, never troubled him; he was haunted only at the last by the thought of this lost chance. One is reminded of the last words of Aaron in Titus Andronicus: "If one good deed in all my life I did, I do repent it from my very soul."

As I have said, this moment in the life of Fondulo is not to be compared, for its possible importance, with that in the life of Pompey. Yet it might possibly have

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

involved great results. If the mangled corpses of Sigismund and John had been picked up that day at the foot of the Cremona Tower, the Council of Constanz might never have sat; and if the Council of Constanz, on the one hand, had not managed to patch up the rent in Christendom by the deposition of John and the two rival Popes, and had not followed their deposition by the election of that consummate politician Martin V., there is no knowing but that the Reformation of the next century might have been forestalled, and its course have run very differently; and, on the other hand, if the Council had not burned Huss and burned the Hussites, the world might have been spared all the mad misery of the Bohemian war.

But be that as it may; the moment with its possibilities, whatever they were, passed all unnoticed, and has gone down into oblivion. Yet it seems to me a moment which some great painter might worthily immortalize. He would be a bold artist, no doubt, who would take the top of a lofty tower for the foreground of his work; but Mr Holman Hunt has done as much as that already. And what suggestions for the artist that moment on Cremona's Tower would have!

The tower, the old Italian town at its foot, the Lombard landscape stretching out into the distance, with "the long reaches of green plain, the lordly rivers, and the background of blue hills and snowy Alps." And then those three figures on the tower: Sigismund, if not quite so gorgeous that day as men saw him shortly after at the Council, "red as a flamingo, with scarlet mantle and crown of gold," yet gorgeous enough no doubt, and with fantastic visions of world-empire in his restless glance; John, the very incarnation of all that was evil in the Ecclesiasticism of the time, the Anti-Christ, the Man of Sin, the Babylonian Abomination;

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

and Fondulo, the typical Italian, such as fascinated the genius of our Webster and inspired his greatest tragedy—Fondulo with the lust of murder in his eyes.

I make a present of this suggestion to whomsoever it may concern.

We have glanced at the end of Fondulo; it may be of some interest to glance also at what Time had in store for the other two worthies who stood on the Tower of Cremona that day. Escaping the tragic fate which Fondulo might have dealt out to them, they had many strange vicissitudes of Fortune still to see.

John had to live through the ordeal of the Council, wild flight from Constanx in the darkness of the night and in the mean guise of a groom, flight hither and thither, capture and imprisonment, escape and recapture—until his final submission and his degradation. At last, restored again to the rank of a cardinal, a tame and peaceful ending, far better than he deserved, came to him in all the odour of orthodoxy if not of sanctity. To Sigismund remained more than twenty years of life; years crammed with empty honours, but also with

“Most disastrous chances,
With moving accidents of flood and field”—

years which, on the one hand, brought to him the crown of Bohemia to add to his honours as King of Hungary and Emperor; but which, on the other hand, saw him in shameful flight, not without suspicion of personal cowardice, from many a Bohemian battlefield, before the terrible Zisca or the blind and bald Procopius,—years which brought to him at last the final and much-coveted honour of coronation at Rome, an honour which we need not grudge to the poor, vain, much-battered “Super-Grammaticam,” though it was so grudgingly granted by the Pope, Eugenius IV., who first of all

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

caused the crown to be set on all awry by another ecclesiastic, and then pushed it straight with his foot as the emperor knelt before him. Neither will we grudge him the peaceful death which came to him, too, a year or so after that scene in Rome, in his own Bohemia, now at last reconciled to its king.

Eminently characteristic of the vanity and the evil of the age in which they lived were these three — Sigismund of its vanity, Fondulo and John of its evil. Yet in that age, as in every other, powers of good were at work, too. Was not our Richard II.'s Queen Anne, the patron of the Wiclifites, the sister of this same Sigismund? And yet higher spiritual forces were at work than those which manifested themselves in English Lollardism or rough Bohemian reform.

For the age of Sigismund and Fondulo was also the age of Gerson, and Tauler, and Thomas à Kempis, of the "Friends of God" and "the Brethren of the Common Life."

POEMS

TO AN OLD DOG

DEAR little friend, they do not know
The reasons why I love thee so ;
For thou art old and peevish grown
Thy youthful fascinations flown !
And thou hast lost the pretty ways
Which had of old their meed of praise
From lips whose greeting now we daily miss
Since Death's lips seal'd them with his chilling kiss.

Silent is now thy joyous bark,
Thy glancing eye is all but dark,
And thin the coat so oft caress'd
By hands which Death's cold hand hath press'd
Whose loving touch comes never more,
Be our sad need however sore.
Because thou'rt portion of that dear dead Past,
I'll love thee long as thou or I may last.

A MEMORY OF IPSAMBOUL

[At the foot of one of the colossal sitting statues of Rameses II. which guard the entrance of the great Temple at Ipsamboul (Abou-Simbel) lies the grave of an English officer who died here.]

GREAT King, who sittest at thy Temple Gate,
Stern, inscrutable, and cruel as Fate,
Watching, across thy swiftly-flowing Nile,
The ages pass, with calm contemptuous smile ;

POEMS

When now again athwart my dreaming gaze
Come Nile and Temple veil'd in desert haze,
And I, once more, can see the smile of scorn
Which thy majestic face unchang'd has worn
For more than thrice a thousand years,
Careless of human hopes and fears,
My heart is struck with the chill of a numbing pain ;
For in the blight of that eternal smile all life seems vain.

But 'tis not thou alone my thoughts may'st rule
Thou guardian, cold and stern, of Ipsamboul,
When memory thus revives the far-off day
Spent in the mystic land which owns thy sway ;
For see at the foot of thy Temple grand,
Threaten'd now by the drift of desert sand,
And now by the Nile's overflowing wave,
There lieth low a simple Christian grave
Which says more to me than thy smile or frown
Though thou wearest old Egypt's double crown,*
And though power and pride and scorn may be thine ;
For thou tellest nought of the love divine
Brought to earth by the lowly One
Of faith in whom speaks that humble stone ;
A love which outlasteth all pride and pomp and might
Waxing to perfect day when these are sunk in night.

I see that grave, and gone are the blight and the pain
Of thy smile, O King, and love waketh to life again.

* The crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.

POEMS

SOMEDAY

WE lightly say
When our ship with full spread wings
Comes home, and our fortune brings,
This will we do or that;
We have our plan so pat
For a life all ease and joy,
All gold without alloy,
Someday.

But in the womb of fate
Lies a day of certain date.
And while our someday tarries yet afar
This one day's portal may be now ajar.

THE TERRIER IN CHURCH

LEFT in Sunday loneliness,
Little "Tips" in deep distress
Stole out to seek her mistress:—

And now a scuffle of little feet
Is heard along the old church nave;
Little "Tips," dost thou think it meet
That thou, with never a soul to save,
Should'st thus disturb a congregation,
At its Sunday work of self salvation?
For men and women know quite well
Why they to church should go;—
Would they not save themselves from Hell?
(If there should be one down below)
And get to Heaven? (If there should prove
To be a Heaven up above.)
Little enough to do with Love.

POEMS

And thou hadst nothing but Love to plead
For thy presence here in thine utmost need ;
Love for thy mistress who is God to thee.
What wonder that thou should'st be ejected by the angry
clerk ?
Poor little "Tips!" too scared to bark,
Thou bidest thy fate
At the Chancel gate,
Raising a deprecating paw
Against "Dogs not admitted" law,
And gazing round with much bewildered eye
That asks for human sympathy.—
Then a sudden bound,
A joyous cry,
Thy God thou hast found,
In her arms dost lie.

Little "Tips," could we so love, then we too might find
The core of the matter and not stick at the rind.

TO A LARK SINGING IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

O BONNIE bird, thou surely art not wise
To nestle in this poor pretence of grass,
To bear aloft into our grimy skies
Thy song divine ; thou who at choice mightst pass
On lightest soaring wing,
To where the Spring indeed is Spring ;
Where the "live murmur" may be heard
Of all the woodlands' quickening powers,
Roused from the winter sleep by April showers ;
Or where, beneath blue heavens unblurred
By smoke, young wheatfields spread
Their carpet green ; or where thro' the rich soil so red,
That knows not coal, the ploughman drives his labouring
team ;